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Life's simple pleasures

Only an 'expert' could have said that the construction of a bumble-bee was so aerodynamically unsound that no such creature could possibly fly. Children, fortunately, are wiser than he. They accept things as they are; and their wide-eyed wonder when you take them for the first time to a Zoo, is the chief part in your own pleasure. In this, there is more than a touch of nostalgia, for once upon a time you stood in their shoes though, of your first visit, you remember now only the elephant, with its load of slightly apprehensive little boys and girls. You moved, perhaps, a little closer to Father as the animal went swaying past. You weren't afraid, of course. But - it was a very *big* elephant. And it was reassuring to know that there was someone nearby who was better able to cope with the situation - if a situation it became. In later years, of course, that 'someone' became, for you and thousands of other people, the Midland Bank. Not that the Midland is any better able than you to deal with the possible vagaries of elephants; but it can cope very well indeed with almost any situation which develops in your financial or business affairs and (you can be sure of this) the Midland won't be afraid - even if it is a very *big* situation.



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The London Charivari

ALL the time nose cones, satellites, specially trained mice and expensive scientific instruments are falling to earth from space. Sometimes they come down where planned and are picked up by patrols; but what is the legal position if they land in my garden? Is finding keeping or is it stealing by finding? Have I any remedy if the mice bite me? Is there any obligation on me to notify the scientific advisers of a foreign power? Does it depend on whether the power is friendly? This kind of thing is going to increase and it is time we were issued with an official leaflet explaining, in clearly numbered paragraphs, what a householder should do who finds his raspberry canes have been flattened by a canister containing a small mammal and some snaps of Mars.

No Rearming

A MEDDLESOME skin diver is bound for the isles of Greece where he hopes to recover the missing arms of the Venus de Milo. What, I wonder, does he propose to do with them? Any attempt to graft them back

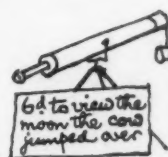


on to the parent statue would horrify the art world. Maimed, the lady is immortal; rearmend, with an apple in her hand, she would be just another marble hussy. Besides, restoration would

ruin a hundred trade-marks and spoil a treasured national jest ("See what happens if you don't stop biting your nails!")

Little Boy Blue Slept Here

DEVON County Council's decision to preserve Old Mother Hubbard's cottage at Yealmpton may have been influenced by the closing quatrain of the nursery rhyme: "She gave him rich dainties, Whenever he fed, And erected



a monument, When he was dead." In neighbouring Somerset a case can be argued for keeping green the memory of Little Jack Horner, said to have been steward to the Abbot of Glastonbury and to have got hold of the Manor of Mells by a trick; the deeds were hidden in a pasty and sent to Henry VIII, but Jack lifted the crust on the way and extracted the "plum." This probably started all that "I'm all right, Jack" business.

Wait till You're Grown Up

AS soon as I heard that sweets containing real whisky were obtainable in unlicensed confectioners' shops I borrowed an eleven-year-old called Barney from a neighbour and sent him to buy me a packet. My intention was to balance him on a chair and see how many of the sweets he



"I've stopped worrying about what the Americans might do—now I'm worried about the Russians worrying about what the Chinese might do."

could eat before he fell over. He had no difficulty in buying the sweets, but that was where my experiment stopped, since it turned out that he didn't like the taste of them. Nor, he reported, did any of his friends, and in any case they couldn't spare one-and-fourpence for a packet of sweets as big as they could normally get for sixpence. So another scandal came to pieces in my hands.

Tots' Corner

"**K** FOR FINLAND" said a headline last week—and it doesn't seem wildly improbable when you think of that baffling Russian alphabet.

Beer is Best

"**W**ELCOME these Europeans," cried Mr. Lumumba the other day, standing on his head with what would have been an unexpected gesture in anybody else, "give them beer if they have none." He was talking about the rump of Belgian settlers in the Congo, and for once showed some sign of knowing something about Belgians. In Belgium, where there are restrictions against the sale of spirits in bars, beer is almost as much a part of their way of life as it is in Britain. The British exhibit at the Brussels Exhibition two years ago contained two pubs. The

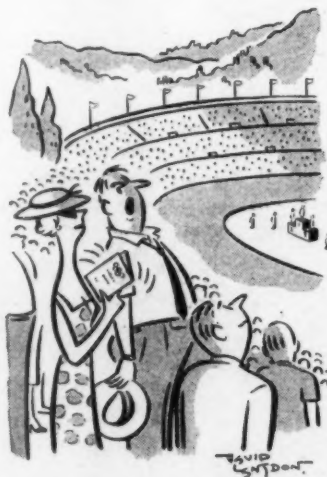
Belgians acknowledge their indebtedness to the British in this matter, and their native brews have such characteristically British labels as "Horse Ale" and "Dog Ale."

Topographical Confusion

THE complaint from Helston that other towns are dancing their own, private Furry Dance ought to be worrying the British Travel Association. Before we know where we are, Wandsworth and Widnes will be offering fitches of bacon for happy couples, Southend will be claiming to be Uncle Tom Cobbleigh's home town and Blackpool Tower will be full of Beefeaters.

Try Dropping a Plate

A COMPLAINT that no one answers the bells in restaurant cars on British Railways has elicited the news that the bell pushes are being dismantled on the ground that the system is little used. It has been little used chiefly because no one answers the bells. But for years the bells have been going dumb everywhere. Ring for a French chambermaid: silence. Ring, if you dare, the bell in a Scots hotel bathroom: silence. Ring for a bellhop in New York; he may come, but he won't hop. In this sensitive age, people don't like answering bells any more. "You rang, sir?" is a phrase which lingers only on the lips of Jeeves.



"Every National Anthem but our own you describe as 'catchy'."

Posse Wanted

I FEEL sorry for Mr. Whittaker, of Tysswg Farm, Abertyswg. Someone keeps damaging his barns, tearing down his fences and killing or abducting his sheep, and he claims that it is all part of a plan to run him off his land. The Monmouthshire police spokesman says, however, "It is a most unusual case. I've heard nothing like it before." It was just Whittaker's luck to run up against a chap who's never seen a western.

The Price of Honour

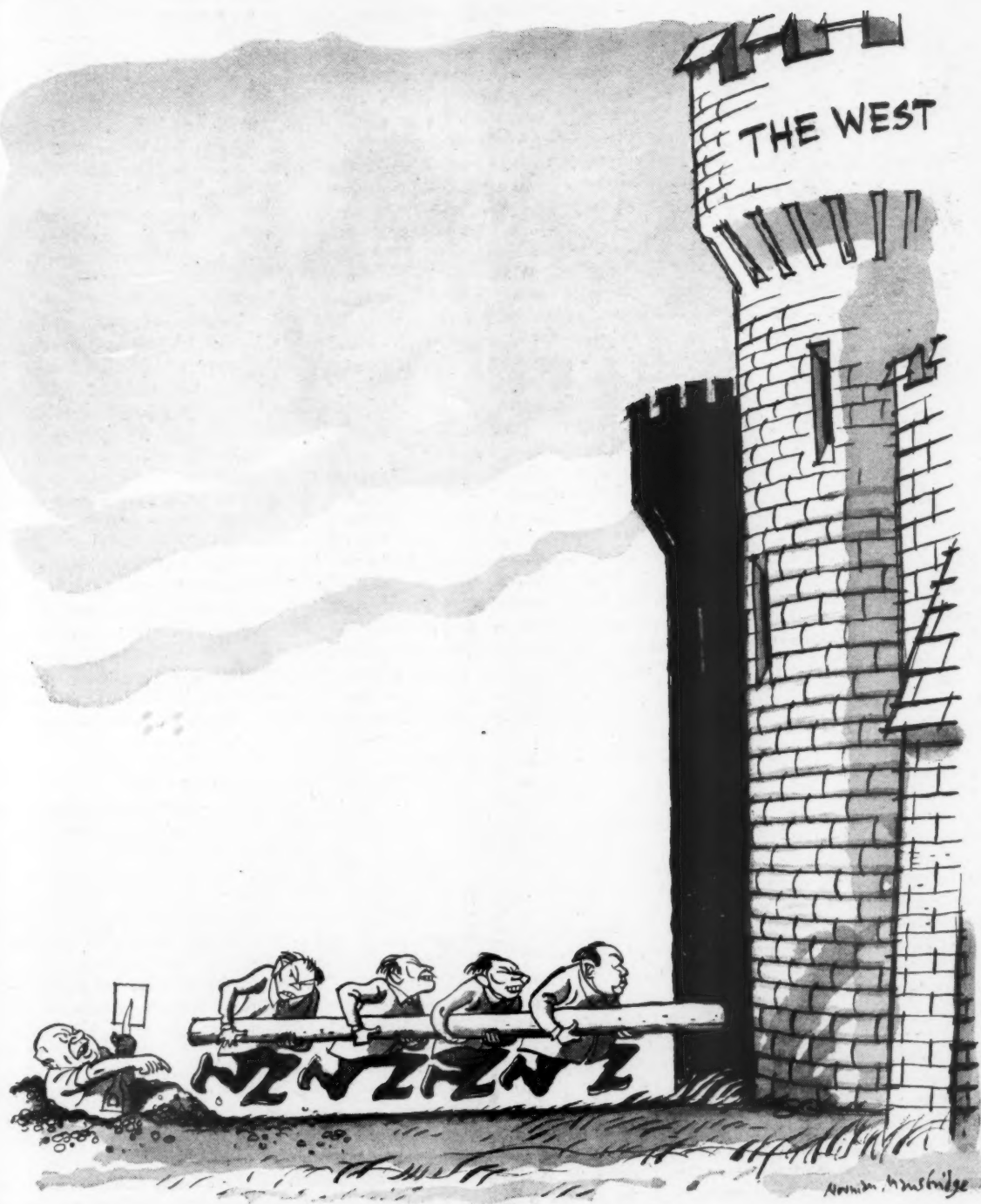
WHAT," they used to say in the heyday of the melodrama, "betray my aged mother for filthy gold? Never, while the breath remains in my body!" Now I see that two Moscow teddy-boys have been accused of "selling their honour and a girl-friend for Scotch whisky and jazz." I suppose gold, filthy or otherwise, is rather less of a draw than it used to be; after all, there must be a steady supply from the escape-kits of American airmen shot down over Russian territory. It would be interesting to know the market-prices of honour and girl-friends in terms of whisky and long-playing records of Elvis Presley, and whether in this respect Russia can be said to be on the gold standard.

Boon for Philatelists

THERE are rumours that in the next Session Parliament is going to place the Post Office on a sound commercial footing. One way of doing this would be to establish a rival Post Office financed from advertising in stamp-books, on mail vans and on postmarks. To see that there was a veneer of gentlemanly restraint in the ensuing competition there would be an Independent Postal Authority, presided over by Sir Arthur fford, Sir William Haley, Sir Kenneth Clark, or if the precedent of Mr. Robens were followed, by Mr. George Brown.

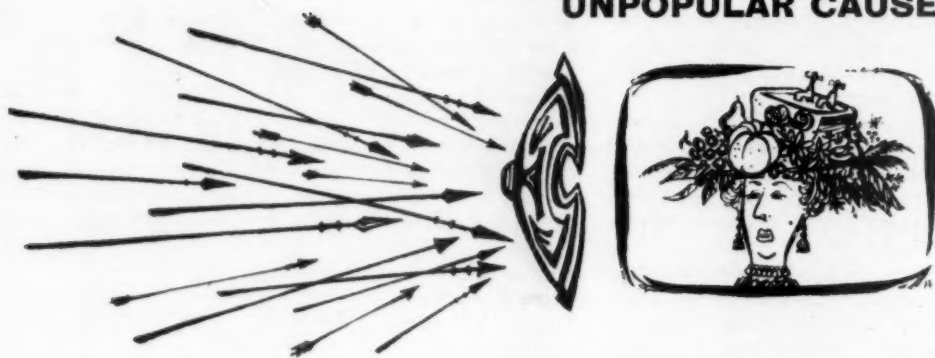
Stop that Cough!

ANOTHER sad little emphasis on the mounting differences between the British and American ways of life is provided by an Abercrombie and Fitch advertisement in the *New Yorker*: "Solar Heat Lighter. Light cigarettes with solar energy whenever the sun shines." —MR. PUNCH



"MIND MY TUNNEL!"

UNPOPULAR CAUSES


In Defence of
EXCESS
by Katharine Whitehorn

A MAN I know is planning to hire an aeroplane, fill it with six friends and fly to the other side of France for dinner at a restaurant which has four Michelin stars; the wines will be the best they have; he reckons it will cost him over four hundred pounds. As he is what Prince Philip would call a working journalist several of the six friends have tried to talk him out of it, urging that for the same money he could take them all to Brittany half a dozen times and have a very decent meal there.

"But if I do it this way," he says, "they will remember it for the rest of their lives."

He is dead right, of course. To be memorable, it is no use being moderate. Yet all one's upbringing is in the direction of moderation. From the date of one's first party when, for fear of being sick on the carpet, one is urged to go easy on the ice cream, to be reasonable, to calm down, to see both sides of the question, to stop shouting, to reject jobs in which the only alternatives are success or failure, and go instead for careers where a moderate success is likely enough. The process, designated by some as growing up, is described by Wordsworth as the world's slow stain; others call it coming to terms with life. Those who listen succeed from the start and go to work for advertising agencies. Yet the ones who really hit the top are the fools who work night and day at crackpot ideas, who are a trial to their wives and a burden to their families, who exasperate their employers and weary their friends—until they end up as Epstein or Callas or D. H. Lawrence. Nothing succeeds like excess.

Shaw said that unreasonable men try to change the world, reasonable men change themselves to fit the world—and so it is only the unreasonable men who ever get anything done. Reasonableness and moderation are both words which could be used to describe that creeping disease whose prevalence keeps American sociologists awake at nights: the desire to be like the others, to be adjusted, to avoid extremes, to be one of the group. It is typified by the terrifying story in

The Lonely Crowd of the mother whose son showed a keenness for the violin; she made him take extra athletics and less music: "I want him," she said, "to be normal." It is rather fortunate that Mozart's family took a different line.

Anyone who suggests that most of the world's best ideas, best symphonies, best paintings have been produced by men who, if not strictly crazy, were at least tricky, fanatical, inconvenient characters, is usually confronted with the Greek ideal of moderation. But in fact the Greeks were a most immoderate lot: they were constantly fighting civil wars, slitting each other's throats, sacrificing all for nothing. Anyone who would sit for five hours on a stone seat must have been immoderately fond of tragedy; anyone who fought as they did at Thermopylae must have been immoderately committed to the military ethic; anyone who, like Socrates, would irritate his jury into sentencing him to death must have been immoderately fond of his mission as gadfly. No doubt the Greeks thought wistfully that moderation might be a restful alternative to their way of life; but it was as much a piece of wishful thinking on their part as the British belief that the Greeks were really Old Rugbeians and great Christian gentlemen at heart.

There are, however, plenty of people who will agree that excessive enthusiasm is useful for producing the Parthenon and the Prelude, and still maintain that for the ordinary purposes of living excess is a mistake. But in fact this is not so. In the two fields which dominate the lives of almost everyone—love and money—moderation is equally disastrous.

The average moderate British male, who does not mind sandwiching a kiss or two in between the beer and the golf, is constantly surprised and irritated by the undeserved success of immoderate foreigners—men who will send a woman enormous bouquets, ring her up in the middle of the night, even (oh I say) burst into tears for love of her. They ought never, in the eyes of sensible men, to get anywhere at all; and yet they constantly get to home base simply

because nothing charms a woman more than being loved to excess. No doubt the immoderate foreigners set their alarms to tell a woman they can't sleep for love of her; possibly a bill for the flowers will be presented in the end; but meantime the woman will be walking on air.

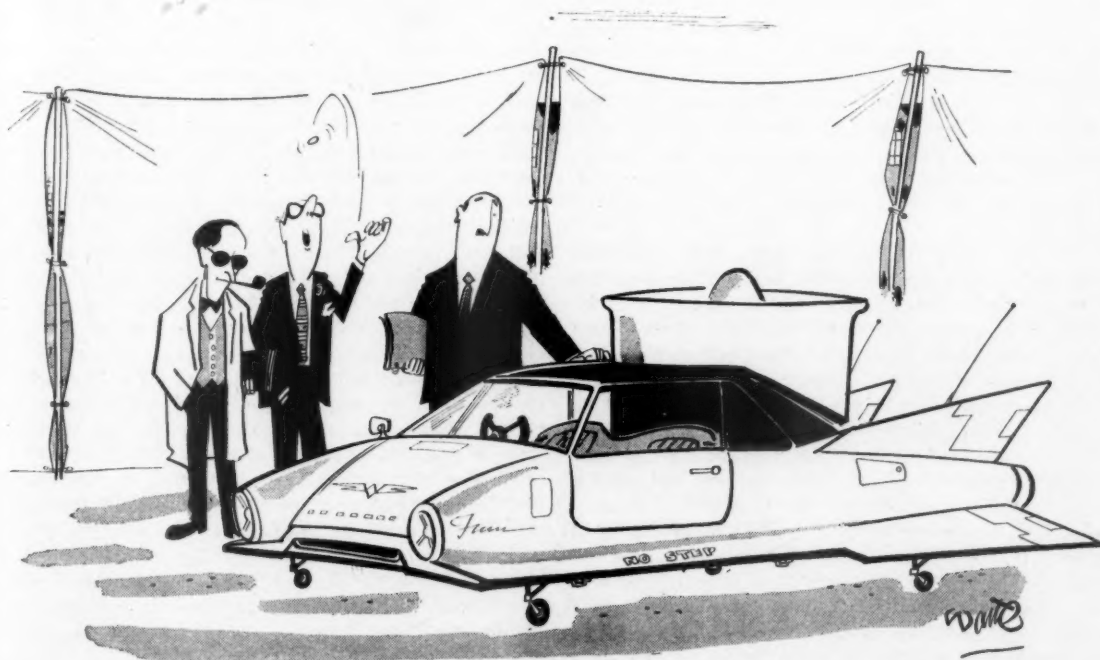
Conversely, the men who think they do not want to be loved to excess are usually deluding themselves. They think they do not want protestations of affection, tears when they go away and scenes when they stay away. But any man who expects (and most of them do) that a woman should constantly cook and wash and clean for him without ever being thanked or praised for it; that she should be content to sit evening after evening while he snores over the newspaper, or be told to save on hats while he smokes the price of a hat every week, or be "understanding" if he has expense-account lunches with beautiful contacts or spends their wedding anniversary playing golf, is expecting to be loved beyond the limit of all reason or sense.

Nowhere is moderation more useless than in the manipulation of money. It is a constant wonder to journalists, actors, tramps and other go-getters that people with steady jobs always seem to have, relatively, so little to show for their large regular salaries. Such *débrouillards* do not realize that it is the very regularity of the intake which prevents anything interesting being done with the money. As Parkinson has pointed out, a small rise in salary is never actually felt at all; because expenditure simply rises imperceptibly to meet income, and *rises equally on all fronts*. It is this even distribution of expenditure which pins a man to his income group like a frog pinned to a board: he can afford the best in nothing if he buys good quality products all round, unless he is a

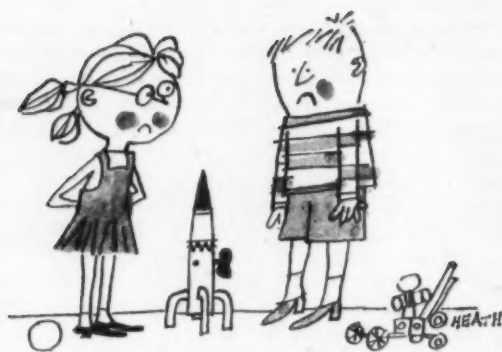
millionaire, in which case he will lose all taste of quality altogether, having lost all sense of contrast. The man with a moderately expensive house, a wife moderately well dressed, a house moderately well furnished—even, as the eighteenth-century poet put it, "a mistress moderately fair" has no room to manoeuvre and no feeling of being prosperous at all. Another man earning the same amount who spends half a year's salary on one superb painting, or a couple who sink the entire bank account in a sailing boat, or a family who make do with fifteen-year-old curtains to buy feed for the horses, or fifteen-year-old horses to go to the opera every night: these people are getting something positive for their money, they are doing it consciously and the fact that they may be poorer in other ways only makes them more aware of the fascinating discrepancies which life has to offer.

People who are rich and poor by turns are, as consumers, James Bond one day and St. Francis the next. Their last sixpences roll around around in pigskin purses; they know how it feels to tip a man—and how it feels to hope he will drop his cigar-end in their direction. The men who appreciate champagne the most are the men who drank water the night before.

There are two inestimable advantages of such up-and-down living. One is that you really appreciate luxury in all its aspects when it does come your way: you notice how pleasant it is to have a bell-hop carry your bag as well as the size of the hotel room, the cleanness of the tablecloth as well as the quality of the food. And the other is that you do not forget how it *feels* to be poor—so you do not make the mistake of thinking that the poor are all surly, undeserving and, in any case, insignificant.



"Heads we show it at Farnborough—tails Earls Court."



"It needs two keys to make it work, and Mum's got the other."

The really big contrasts are perhaps usually forced upon one rather than chosen; but to decide to spend excessively on one thing is a matter of choice—and the right choice at that. All those cheerful young men around the wrong end of Chelsea who always seem to have the money for a car and a good meal and a Riviera summer, but spend almost nothing on rent, soap or new pullovers could easily wipe out their power to spend on the things they enjoy simply by upping the expenditure ever so slightly on everything else. The point is that almost any income will cover almost any expenditure so long as it is, to all intents and purposes, the *only* expenditure above subsistence level.

Sir John Rothenstein, making the year's silliest remark, said that he had never been poor enough to own a television set—a particularly waspish expression of a well-known middle-class feeling: that what used to be called the working classes are *cheating* when they find the money for TV. From this the middle classes conclude that the poor are a lot richer than they are; but in fact all that is happening is that the "working classes" are putting all their eggs in one basket, and refusing to pay that extra twopence here and tenpence there which goes with shopping in a "better" neighbourhood. It is an example of mass shrewdness which should be an inspiration to us all.

Actually, of course, the middle classes have their own immoderate expenditure: the public schools. Appreciating that privileged education is worth more in the middle of the twentieth century than a decorative background or a large taxable income, they buy cardigans instead of central heating, golf clubs instead of trips to the Mediterranean, and persevere with all the austerities of British food to pay for their sons' education; and very right and proper too.

Whether you spend or love immoderately is really your own affair; in the sphere of morals, politics, and religion excess and moderation become a matter of public concern. In religion, it is generally accepted that a certain amount of enthusiasm (I use the word in its eighteenth-century sense) is permitted in the early days: Christianity without the saints, the martyrs and a P.R.O. like St. Paul would never have won over the public in the way it did. But martyrs make inconvenient companions; they argue till the veins stand out like knotted scourges on their foreheads; they talk one into selling all one has and giving to the poor; the thing

is made to exceed all reasonable bounds. It is hardly surprising that over the years the moderates have managed to do away with that sort of thing and establish the kind of Christianity that does not, as the man said, interfere with a man's private life. It seems curst and old-fashioned to suggest that this process is just possibly deplorable: that a religion, a political theory even, might in its early, uncongenial, unmodified state perhaps be a sight more use than the conventional adaptations. Excessive Christianity, excessive liberalism, excessive anger that more than half the world's population are short of food the entire time—all these things might just possibly alter something or achieve something. But that, moderation will always prevent. Moderation is the means used by every reactionary government since politics began to draw the teeth of any reform which seriously threatened to affect the *status quo*: the reactionary party has simply brought in the measure itself, in a form designed to remove the glaring scandal without removing the basic injustice. Moderation, too, is what we all practise in the way of private charity: a half-crown in the collecting box, the occasional cheque, maybe a sale of work: nothing unreasonable. It is a good thing for us that there are one or two immoderate people who actually give up other jobs, bother to take the training and the bad pay and the anti-typhoid injections and go out and spend the money for us; the bandages and tinned food would be precious little use sitting in a warehouse—which is where they would be if a few people were not sufficiently lacerated by things like refugee camps and leper colonies actually to go out there and do something.

Even in minor, more personal ways, it is not the moderates one turns to in a fix. We all have two types of friends: the ones on whose doorstep you can turn up filthy, jobless, and in tears at two in the morning, who will keep you for weeks and months and look after you with quite unreasonable kindness. And there are the others, the ones who will give you a bed—but only for a night or two; who will let you have some money, provided you can pay it back; who will lend you books but not a car. Give me the extremists any day.

Of course it may be argued (and often is) that if excess in good causes is more likely to get results, excess in bad causes will too. But in an odd way a bad excess often contains within it the seeds of its own correction. Lie drunk in a gutter one night and you will stick to black coffee the next. Eat too much one day and you notice it; but half a teaspoonful of sugar a day will bring you 44-inch hips at age 44, as the insurance ads say. If you want to get rid of a bad law, enforce it. The present immoderate race policies in South Africa will undoubtedly lead to the cutting of the throats of all who practise them; more restrained versions of the same thing can go on for ever. Hitler's fascism was a lot worse than Franco's—but Franco's is with us still.

Moderation is the suburbia of the mind, neither one thing nor the other: the grey compromise that blurs the edges of experience, blunts the sword of justice, deadens the . . . perhaps I am going to extremes. Let me merely say that if experience is the name that other people give to their mistakes, moderation is the word that other people give to their inertia.

Next Week:

In Defence of Illiteracy, by Kingsley Amis

Attention Mr. Moores

IN a way, I suppose, you could call me—the term happening to be around—a status seeker. I used to be a snob. Status-seeking is the business of avoiding common or garden prestige symbols, the glittering emblems of an affluent and acquisitive society, and being . . . well, different. I used to own a car with a radio and pennant labels of places visited: then I read that Lady Mary — considers taxis “the only civilized form of travel,” so I bought a taxi. When I was instructed by the Planet Laundry Service, in an advertisement, that “People who matter still have personal servants,” I thought very hard about getting rid of my washing machine, but finally decided to hold it —with the help of the Imperial and Overseas Finance Company—as a hedge against inflation. When I read that only one member of a commission on the future of television actually had access to a TV receiver, I came near to swapping my set for a down payment on an upright piano, but in the end I compromised by dismantling the chimney aerial and installing an indoor affair.

Several times in the last year or so I have toyed with the idea of giving up football pools and switching to Premium Bonds, which have more class. My loathing of the pools is only partly due to a long run of failure to win a prize: I object to them on purely æsthetic grounds, to the forms themselves—the fat, picture-postcardy lettering, the seductive literature decorated with the moronic faces of former winners (“Brighton Lady Wins £200,000!”—Brighton Lady, I ask you!), the vague smell of medicated skin ointment in the pools paper, the tinted envelopes. And I now object even more strongly because I’ve just read details of how winners are molycoddled towards financial tycoonery by investment advisory committees. A Littlewoods winner, for example, is immediately handed a book called *Sound Guide to Investments* and invited to seek the help of a committee consisting of a stock-broker, a firm of solicitors, the head of the trustee department of a big bank and Mr. Cecil Moores. At the moment

winners are being advised to play it cool in Savings Certificates, short-dated Gilts, debentures and such admirable equities as I.C.I., Distillers, and Marks and Spencer. I don’t know who pays for these books and all this advice, but I have the uneasy feeling that I do, that the lucky winners are getting this bonus deal at my expense. And I don’t like it.

I am well aware that the Stock Exchange benefits from the millions shovelled into the investment markets by these pools winners, and it may be that all this increased activity is not without its effect in a roundabout way on the deposits standing to my name in my Post Office savings book. I doubt it though.

What hurts is the injustice of the system, the rewarding of those already rewarded and the penalizing of the unfortunate.

If Mr. Moores is honest with himself he will realize that the ordinary, unsuccessful pools punter is far more deserving of investment advice than the winners. This is the day of the small investor. Everybody says so, the Chairman of the Stock Exchange, the Manageress of Unit Trusts, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, everybody. Then why don’t Mr. Moores and his committee tell us how to *invest* the sums

we stake each week on the pools? I’m quite sure they would advise winners not to sink their prizes in further goes at the pools. Then why don’t they offer the same advice to all? To me? Over the years the pools have had quite a lot of my money and I have nothing whatever to show for it. With a little fatherly advice I should now be the proud possessor of a fat little portfolio—a nest-egg in Savings Certificates, a dollop of debentures and (who knows?) a few short-dated Gilts and leading equities.

And I dare say that with this modest portfolio behind me I should be self-assured enough to give up status-seeking and get on with the business of enjoying my television set, my washing-machine and my taxi.

What about it, Mr. Moores?

— A. B. H.

☆

“On and on they came to the stirring crash of the marital music from bands that made a tight knot of darkness high on the gleaming terrace . . .”—*The Guardian*

No extra-curricular fraternization, please.



The Oxford Crisis

The United Nations face their most serious challenge

By CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

IT would be difficult to exaggerate the gravity of the present situation in Oxford. Latest reports confirm that there has been serious rioting among the Dons, driven to exasperation by the delays of the United Kingdom authorities in finding a solution for the problem of Oxford's roads. The Dean of Christ Church has fled the city and taken refuge at Bletchley, and a provisional government has been established at Wadham under Lord David Cecil, which has proclaimed the independence of the University, deposed Mr. Macmillan from the Chancellorship, closed Magdalen Bridge, banished all motor vehicles from the city and appealed for recognition to the United Nations. It is not yet clear whether or not the revolutionaries are partisans of Sir Oliver Franks or whether this is an independent movement. The United Nations thus find themselves faced with a situation of extraordinary delicacy. There have indeed been criticisms of the conduct of the recent Cancellarian election, and it would of course be absurd to expect a company of untrained Dons to order their

elections in a manner to which we with our centuries of democratic tradition behind us are accustomed. Yet, as academic elections go, the election was tolerably fair and free and no one at the time challenged Mr. Macmillan's title. The United Nations must deal with facts as they are, and it is clearly right to recognize Mr. Macmillan as the constitutional Chancellor of Oxford.

At the same time Mr. Macmillan's position is here somewhat anomalous, for if he is the Chancellor he also holds other posts outside the city. There can be no doubt about it that it was Mr. Macmillan who was responsible for allowing the gigantic combine of Marks and Spencer to establish itself on what had previously been the site of the Clarendon Hotel. It is easy to understand how disruptive has been the effect of the introduction of this capitalistic emporium into the simple, traditional and impoverished life of Oxford.

The industrialists who in recent years have settled in or near Oxford have indeed conferred certain material amenities on the University. They

have put money into the pockets of the Dons, but it may well be that they have been at fault in their failure to recognize that it was not material amenities so much as social recognition as equals after which the Dons hankered.

It was not, it is true, in his capacity as Chancellor but in quite another capacity that Mr. Macmillan gave his permission for this bourgeois invasion of Oxford. Yet it would be unreasonable to expect the simple Don to distinguish between Mr. Macmillan in one capacity and Mr. Macmillan in another. Such refinements are for sophisticated minds, and one can therefore well understand the resentment felt against him in academic circles. Violence indeed is to be deplored. The recent outrages that have taken place in the Broad, around the Martyrs' Memorial and indeed even in the Bodleian itself, where it is reliably reported that no fewer than two sub-librarians have been debagged, cannot be too strongly condemned.

The degree of academic support for Lord David Cecil is uncertain. It is not clear whether, as some reports assert, Mr. Sparrow, the Warden of All Souls, has indeed joined his Government, or whether, to follow another rumour, he has taken refuge on Boars Hill. Yet in any event, as was wittily said, one Sparrow does not make a majority. It is unquestionable that a large body of academic opinion—whether a formal majority or not—is on Lord David Cecil's side. He cannot be dismissed as a mere agitator.

Yet it must be recognized—it is a criticism indeed of Lord Nuffield and his fellow industrialists rather than of the Dons—that there are among the Dons only the tiniest handful that has any experience of business administration. It is said that not more than twelve Fellows in all the Colleges of the University have obtained a degree at a business or technical school. How is it to be expected that such persons, unaided by others of wider experience, will be able to direct the practical affairs of a modern community? We



"Why don't you give him a transfer if that's what he wants?"

would not indeed subscribe to the theory, which was so popular in certain circles a generation or two ago, that there is some absolute biological inferiority in the mind of a Don as opposed to that of any other person. The wind of change is blowing and the day will doubtless dawn when Dons are fit for self-government.

But in the very interest of Dons themselves it is important that we should not abdicate our responsibilities too rapidly. To-day, and for at least another generation or so, Dons certainly still need the co-operation of persons from the outside world to help them to manage their own affairs. Our object should be to build up a mixed society in which Dons and other people can live peacefully and amicably together.

That being so, it would be impossible for the United Nations to welcome Lord David Cecil's proposal to exclude all traffic from Oxford and to bring to an end all contacts between Oxford and the outside world. Nor indeed is it the business of the United Nations to take a side in any question of internal politics. If United Nations troops go into Oxford, as it looks inevitable that they will, it must be made clear that they go there solely to maintain order among the Dons, which recent disputes about the roads, about compulsory Latin and about the Chancellorship have made abundantly clear that the Dons are not yet capable of maintaining for themselves. It is not for the United Nations to settle what shall be the relation of Wadham to the rest of the University. That is a matter for the Fellows of Wadham. But at the same time it is clear that the restoration of order is the essential preliminary for taking such a decision.

It must be frankly accepted that the entry of the United Nations troops would not be universally popular among the Dons. There are those who would take the gravest objection to the presence of white troops in their midst. We have taken note of the recent speech of the Regius Professor. We deplore it as we deplore all threats of violence. But we do not ourselves interpret the present excavations of the road outside Christ Church as a military manoeuvre. Indeed we can never remember a time when the road outside Christ Church was not being dug up, and we think it improbable that if the United Nations



should decide to go in their troops will meet with any organized military resistance from the Dons, bitterly divided among themselves as they are. There may indeed be isolated incidents, a Junior Dean killed or a Proctor injured, but organized resistance is, we are convinced, improbable. The Dons are not by nature a military race.

The general prosperity of Birmingham and the other great manufacturing towns of the Midlands depends on a steady flow of motor traffic through the streets of Oxford, and it may well prove in the end that for that flow to be maintained it will be necessary for a courageous Minister of Transport to destroy

the obstructing Colleges. But if the Colleges are to be destroyed it is essential that they be destroyed in an orderly fashion. Such threats as those of Dr. Nkrumah to occupy Balliol College with Ghanaian troops acting without any sort of authority from the United Nations cannot be too strongly condemned.

☆

"Mr. Macmillan returned to London yesterday after his shooting holiday in Yorkshire. He looked fit and had some grouse."—*Sunday Times*

Not about getting the bird, by any chance?

Wherefore Stopp'st Thou Me?

By DAVID STONE



HE was there again on the aeroplane last week. It was a sultry day, and the other passengers settled down quickly and silently. Not him.

"Please don't put the hostess on the rack," he said ringingly. The silence that followed this only deterred him briefly. When drinks were brought round, he was off again.

"I'd rather have a pint of the wine of the country," he said, every syllable clear over the howl of the turbo-props.

I managed to doze off after this, and only in the Customs Hall did I come in earshot again.

"Four gold bars, a Sten, three hundred rounds and some heroin," he was saying to the Customs officer.

I know it is fanciful to say that I am the only one who suffers from wags, but occasionally, after a particularly trying hour in a corridorless train with the terror of the Esher T.A., I do feel slightly hunted. If wags would only set each other's tables in a roar, that wouldn't be so bad. But this seems to be against the rules. It is the non-wag who has to suffer.

The man on the 'plane was Second XV stuff compared with a merry sales manager called Knocker. One of the few great fears of my life is running

into him again. From the first genial punch in my ribs I knew we were going to be great friends.

We were both staying at a small hotel in Norfolk. He came into the dining room on his first night, executed a few dance steps round two maiden sisters dressed in brown lace who were sitting near me.

"Valentino didn't die, you know," he said, "he shot himself when he saw me tango." He leaned towards one of the sisters. "Shall we go the Casbah?" he murmured. The rest of the dinner went with a tremendous swing. We had turning water into wine, palming the egg and (a bit of a falling off, this) pinching the maid's bottom.

I think he felt I was lonely or something, for he adopted me as his straight man. I can't remember all his jests, but there were several I have since recognized as part of the classical wag repertoire. There was the one about my blue jeans ("Perhaps Jean wants them back") and the menu ("It's not the menu but the men you sit next to"). And practical waggishness too. I was sitting in the bar one evening when a melodious moo made me look up. The mask of a grinning cow, was looking at me over the edge of the bar.

"Good evening, Knocker," I said.

He was so pleased with this that he almost forgot to substitute my glass for a joke one that let me pour beer down my shirt front.

I have not seen him since, but sometimes in my dreams, just as I am about to kiss hands or accept the Nobel Prize, there is a jovial shout and Knocker appears, asking if I have seen that Circassian girl lately, or whether the Scrubs was so bad after all.

In a restaurant the other night a wag—no Knocker, but certain to do better next term—had the band-leader brought over to his thriving table.

"Can you play anything?" he asked.

"Certainly, sir."



HARGREAVES.



"I don't know where we'd be without Mr. Turnbull. He takes them all to bits again."

"Then why don't you and your band go out and play billiards?"

Is there any solution to wags? Trying to cap them is fatal. Years of in-fighting just play you into their hands. And rudeness is no better.

Perhaps, as a friend of mine suggested, the only satisfactory solution is to shoot them, and then hope for a sympathetic judge who was once trapped in a lift with Knocker for two hours.

☆

"Alan Simpson and Ray Galton have concocted the plot. It has Hancock as a London clerk who rebels against convention and goes off to the Latin quarter in Paris to become an artist. Which, when you come to think of it, was what the painter Gauguin was, and did!"—*Evening News*

When you come to think of what?

A Sentimental Ballad

To be sung by an Irish soldier who, while keeping the peace in the Congo, reads in a newspaper that the Irish are now "potentially the best-fed nation in the world."

DOWN in the Celtic Twilight my love and I would meet
And walk awhile, and talk awhile of the fights in Silver Street,
With a word for potato blight, maybe, amid the mountains of Mourne—
All is changed utterly. A sensible beauty is born.

Now as I pace my sentry-go my time I do employ
Fitting new meanings to the words of "The Wild Colonial Boy";
It's the Englishry themselves are fretting over the rent to-day;
And they're raising record crops by Galway Bay, by Gaaaaaakway Bay.

O Paddy dear, I ask myself, where will it ever end?
And would it not have driven Finn MacCool around the bend
To see the sober customers a-sitting in shebeens
Conversing of their proteins and the eating of the greens?

— PETER DICKINSON

Farnborough, 1960



Make the Most of Your Airfield

By H. F. ELLIS

SOME people are never pleased, don't seem able to realize their luck.

"There goes another of those damned 707's!" a householder roared at me, pulling a pair of woollen muffs down over his ears. He lives near London Airport and flinches easily for a man of forty-five.

"It's a 707-420* actually," I said, looking up. "See the B.O.A.C. markings?"

"What the devil does it matter whether it's a 707-420 or a 720-407?" he said bitterly. "Just listen to the thing!"

I was a good deal surprised by his attitude. "The point about the 707-420," I told him, "is that it has Rolls-Royce Conway engines, each with a take-off power of 17,500 pounds static thrust, as opposed to the 13,000 pounds of the 707-120's Pratt and Whitney JT3C-6 engines and the 15,800 and 16,800 pounds of the -220's and -320's JT4A-3's and JT4A-9's, respectively. As for the 720-407 you mention, I know of no such aeroplane. You are perhaps thinking of the 720-047, a medium-haul Boeing with JT3C-7's giving a thrust of only 12,000, of which

*B.O.A.C., to be strictly accurate, operate Boeing 707-436's. I did not wish to worry my friend with local modifications of the basic -420 design.

I believe Western Airlines have a small number on order for delivery in April of next year—and even that you are extremely unlikely to see. Western Airlines do not operate east of Minneapolis, you know."

"This is all so much gibberish to me," my friend said from the look-out post under the sofa whither he had retired to watch a DC-8 sweep by. "I know nothing about aeroplanes except that these Boeings are driving me mad. Get a load of *that* one, will you!"

What was one to say in face of such stupidity? Even if he had failed to notice the air-intakes below the nose, or was ignorant of the fact that the 707 doesn't have them, he might surely have known that Alitalia don't fly Boeings. But he didn't. When I pressed him on the matter he admitted, with a good deal of blasphemy, that he couldn't tell the markings of one airline from another. I never knew a man with such opportunities throw them so recklessly away. The last straw was when, punctually at five o'clock, just as we were finishing tea, a Comet 4 came majestically in and I found out, more or less by chance, that he didn't even know it was Flight BA 705 from Karachi. "So what am I supposed to do if it does leave Pakistan at 7.55 in the morning," he cried.

"Only on Tuesdays," I put in.

"—send them a Good Luck cable, or what? You don't seem to understand that all I want to do, like everyone else who lives around here, is to forget these frightful machines."

This is a most unfortunate and mistaken attitude to adopt. You might as well, as I tried to explain to my friend, have a house overlooking the old Great Western line and not be able to identify a "Castle" class locomotive or know when the down Red Dragon was due. "Grasp the nettle, man," I said. "Feed the hand that bites you. What's the use of lying awake all night grinding your teeth? What you want to do is look at your watch and say to yourself 'Aha! That high-pitched whine will be the 3.30 a.m. Night Tourist for Zurich setting off. Light refreshments only.' Once you get the hang of it you'll never be bored, not even when nothing seems to be happening. Suppose it's around 6.30 on a Saturday morning and just for a moment you can't hear anything coming in or going out. You'll be able to remind yourself that those people who climbed aboard Flight SA 218 at Wadi Halfa forty-five minutes after midnight will be getting their breakfast about now, in good time before she touches down at Rome at 7.45—in a DC-7B of course, unless they've switched by now to one of the Boeing 707-344's South African Airways have

on order. You ought to check on that at 1.50 p.m. when Flight 218 is due in here."

He had his ear-muffs down again, however, and pretended not to hear.

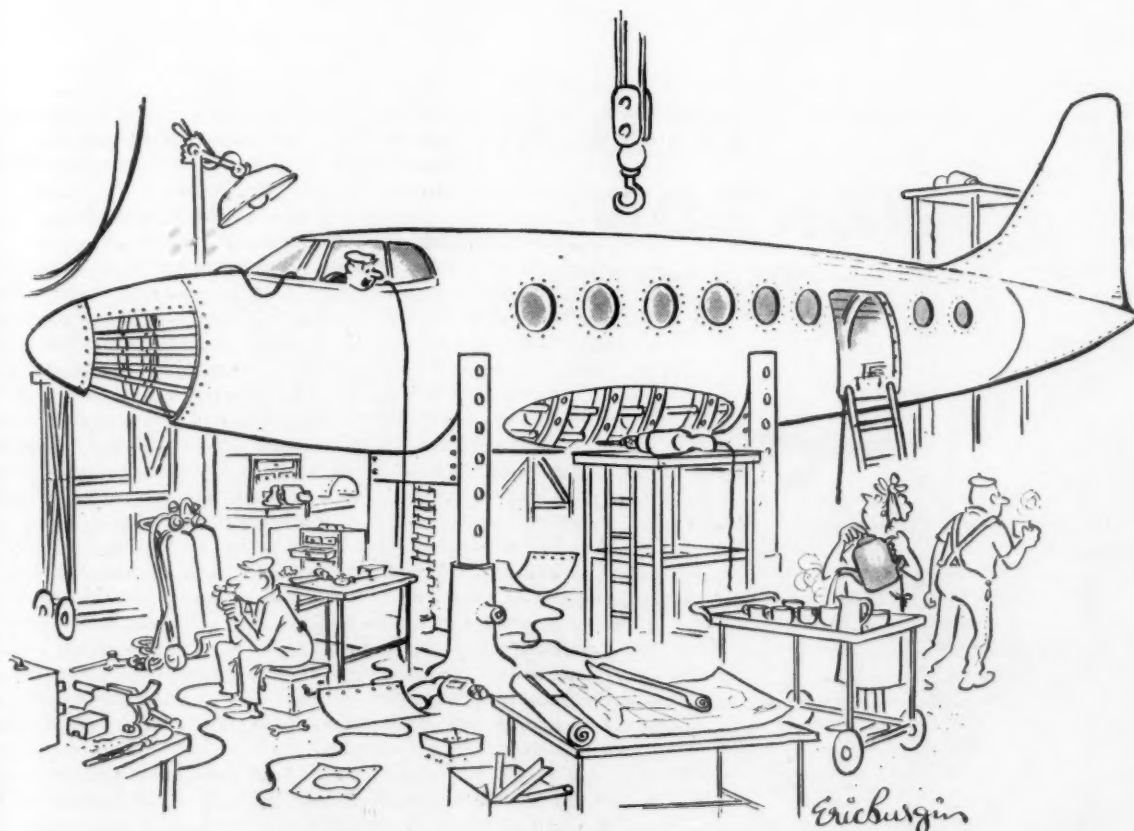
This obdurate man is not, I am afraid, alone in his refusal to make the most of his airfield. I have read that there are people in East Anglia who complain because enormous American bombers sometimes pass over their chimneys—quite oblivious apparently of the romantic thought that any one of them may be setting off on a journey that Mr. Khrushchev will later describe as spying. Does it mean nothing to them, as the huge machine makes the windows rattle again, that *Mr. Macmillan may have been told where it is going?*

Householders seem to have a thing

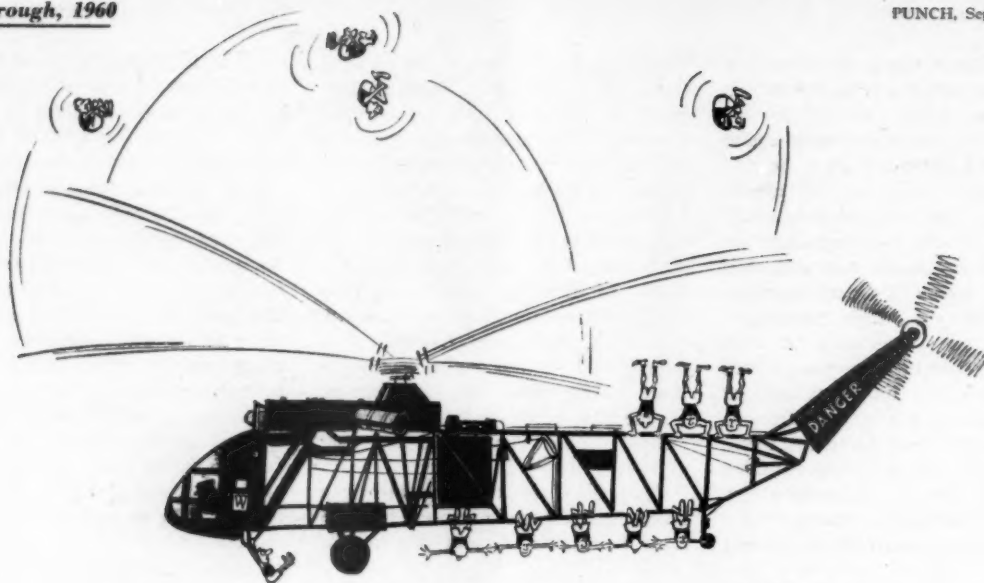
about airfields. There is no pleasing them. If the airfield is working they object to the noise. If it has been abandoned they complain that the grass growing through the runways is unsightly and the hangars are full of Poles. If it has been turned into a missile site they say they feel exposed and vulnerable, instead of congratulating themselves that they live by the only kind of airfield from which no loud noise will, with luck, ever emanate—and if it does it will be the last noise they'll hear. They never spare a thought for the state of nervous dread habitual among people who don't live near airfields.

After all, if the airfield is *there* you know the worst, and can settle down to learn from what remote part of the

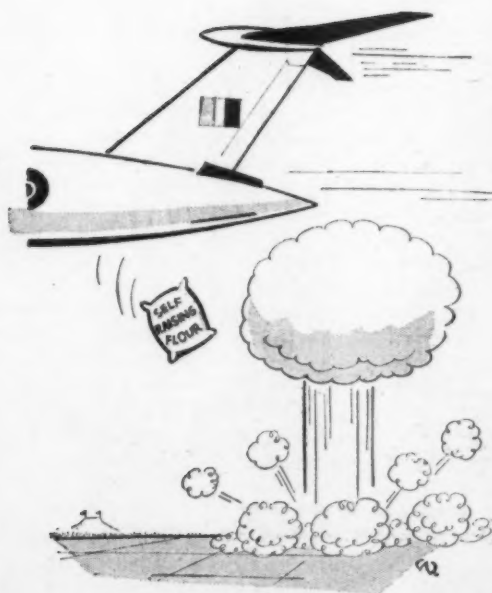
world that almighty rumble at 8.20 a.m. on a Wednesday started and how, if at all, the double-slotted flaps on a Boeing differ from those on a DC-8. This is a far happier condition than that of the millions of householders who fear that an airfield *may* be built near them one day. All along our shores from Dover to Bournemouth and beyond live rows and rows of people who read with terror, not long ago, the suggestion that the best thing to do with supersonic aircraft, when their day arrives, will be to bring them down along the coast and ferry the passengers up to London by helicopter. In their narrow-minded way they can think of nothing but the *noise*. They haven't yet had a chance, you see, to find out how to make the most of an airfield.



"Skipper to stewardess . . . skipper to stewardess . . . three lumps and not too milky . . . over and out."



OLD HENDON DAYS



STIMULATING as it is to see some new fighter approach in silence above Farnborough runway while little wisps of ectoplasm play over the wing surfaces, then burst into a roar as it climbs at Mach .999 past the control tower, there were excitements at the old R.A.F. displays that can never be matched with the present equipment.

When to the Orderly Room of sweet silent thought I summon up remembrance of things past, what I always see first of all is those "pull-off" jumps. For this purpose a dozen intrepid young men stood near the trailing edges of the wings of Vickers Vimy bombers, or whatever their current replacement was, holding like grim death to the struts. As the bombers roared past at a full eighty miles an hour, looking like the Spanish Armada sailing into battle, some unfeeling persons inside them unlashed the young men's parachutes, which in no time yanked them off the wings and lowered them to the middle of Hendon airfield.

I think too of those pitiless attacks by what now seem the most minute bombers on savage and flakless tribesmen, whose mud huts were reduced to John Innes compost by relays of tiny bombs dropped with the punctual rotation of street workers combining to drive a spike into the road-surface; and of Flying-Officer Sandbags, who yearly parachuted to safety from his blazing captive observation balloon; and of trios of Gauntlets doing formation aerobatics tied together by the outboard struts. Then there was "crazy flying" by R.A.F. instructors in real Service types; on at least one occasion this ended with a heavy pancake landing in the middle of the field which reversed the dihedral angle of the wings and removed the undercarriage, but left the pilot (with whom I had been at school) sufficiently unharmed to walk away in a gale of laughter.

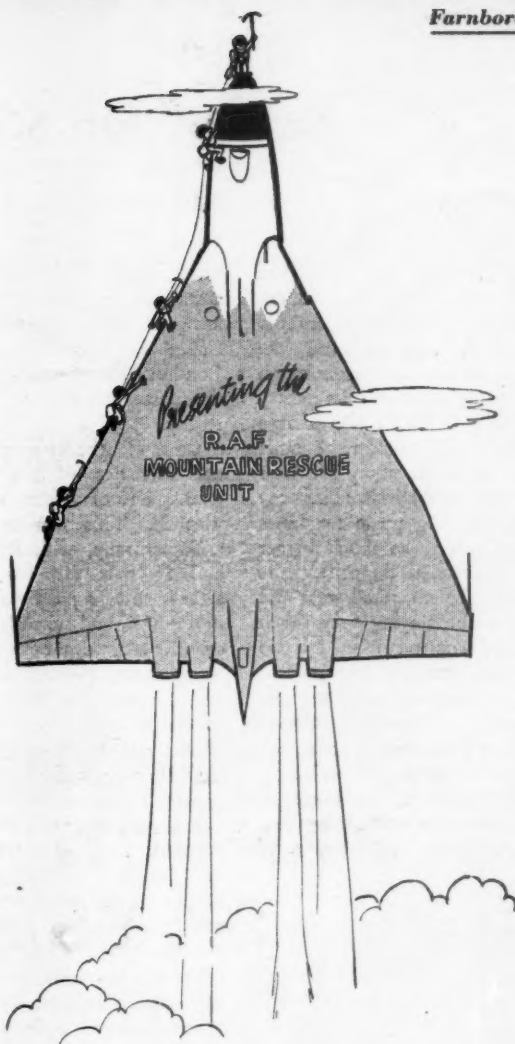
All gone, alas. Progress has defeated us. Captive balloons are relegated to the barrage, and no one goes up in baskets

underneath them except recruits in the Parachute Regiment. Savage tribesmen, if so much as a single bomb fell on their village, would cable their representative at the United Nations to file a vigorous protest.

None the less I feel that an effort ought to be made to salvage some of the old magic and adapt it to current conditions. Even if there are no struts there is masses of room on the wing of a Vulcan to stage some kind of performance. A chimpanzee's tea-party would be perhaps a bit vulgar (this kind of thing is reserved for the rocket people nowadays); but I see no reason why a representative of the manufacturers shouldn't recline on the wing-surface, bracing his feet against the air-brakes if necessary, and be pulled off *forwards* by a cable attached to a Blue Steel bomb, thus effectively demonstrating something or other and also entertaining the crowd.

There could be no point in tying the Hunters of 111 Squadron together, since they already give the impression that they *are* tied together, and in any case their radius of manoeuvre is so enormous that most of the time they would be too far away for the ropes to be visible. But why not tie them to something else? Cody's tree springs to mind, being adapted for exactly that purpose. I would like to see them all tied to that and giving an imitation of model aircraft cable-controlled by an intelligent Rover Scout.

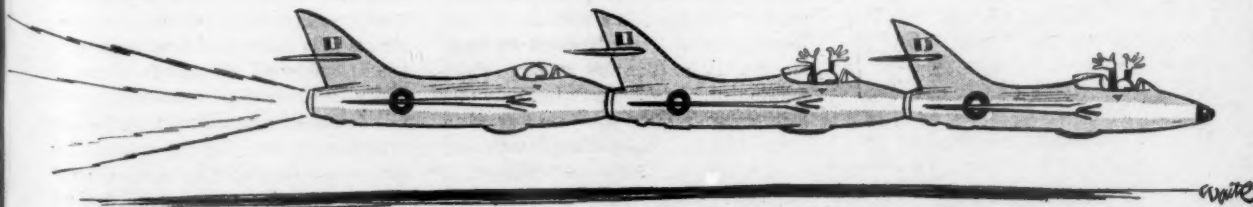
Crazy flying we already have from Mr. Porteous and his nimble Austers, but it would be much more entertaining performed by a trio of Victors, probably surplus to Government requirements by now, and there would be the additional thrill of knowing that if one of them did prang on the runway it would cost the taxpayer half a million or so. As for setpiece displays of bombing, there must be few air-minded youngsters to-day who wouldn't like to know what an H-bomb explosion is really like at close quarters . . .



I am one of Farnborough's keenest devotees, and I wouldn't want the S.B.A.C. to think that I am dissatisfied with their little cabaret. But it is obvious that as the years go by, and the time taken to get a new design into the air gets longer and longer, and fewer and fewer firms can afford to produce new types, the display as a display is likely to deteriorate from the public's point of view. I simply offer

these few suggestions, plus a few more which I am retaining for the time being, so that the public may still be lured in when all that the layman has to see is the newest modifications of the VC 10 and the Trident (coming into service the year after next) and a mass of unmanned electronically controlled equipment that may never get off the ground for all he knows.

—B. A. YOUNG



School for Stewardesses

By PATRICK SKENE CATLING

LOOKING around him at all the latest imaginatively designed, exquisitely engineered, splendidly polished aircraft and missiles, the ordinary lay visitor to Farnborough might conceivably experience an uneasy sense of humility. "Do I really deserve all this?" he might wonder. I must confess that in recent years I myself occasionally felt misgivings about my status in the Air Age: the machines seemed to be getting so much bigger and more mechanical all the time, while I, not counting slight general wear and tear, seemed to be staying very much the same, and the resulting relative effect, of course, was that I seemed to be shrinking, weakening, and becoming simpler-minded, aviationwise, almost to the point of total stultification. In fact there were occasions, difficult now to acknowledge, when the sense of inadequacy was so overwhelming that I preferred to cross large bodies of

water, especially in mid-winter, not in aircraft at all but in ships. Since then, however, I have visited the B.O.A.C. Cabin Services Training Centre at London Airport, and to-day I am twice the passenger I was. I *want* to fly. Really.

One of the immediately notable characteristics of the school is its atmosphere of vivacious humanity and warmth. This was achieved in part architecturally, with light and colour, and in part administratively; there seemed to be a goodly amount of lively movement and cheerful conversation on the stairways between classes and refreshments. A clatter of high heels and a radiance of smiles made it easy to believe in the students' faith in the official statement on the wall that "a passenger is not a cold statistic."

John Lawrence, the chief instructor, who is a chevalier of the *Cercle Epicurien Mondial*, a winner of the Seal of Culinary Merit of the Epicurean Circle, an affiliate of the Royal Society of Health, and, furthermore, a defeater of the panel in "What's My Line?", gave me some warm statistics and other information about air stewardesses and their intensive eight-week course of training.

Until 1943 British airliners used to be served by stewards only; stewardesses were introduced during the second world war as substitutes, and by the time the war was over it was agreed that there could be no satisfactory substitutes for stewardesses. Now there are five hundred stewardesses flying with B.O.A.C., and every year about 10,000 young women are called, but only about two hundred are chosen. Larger, faster planes have been increasing the number of stewardesses needed, and there is a continuous loss, from the Corporation's point of view, by marriage (there's nobody more nubile than a stewardess), but only one former requirement has been waived to make recruiting easier: applicants now need speak no language other than English, though extra languages still

may help in the competition for appointments.

Applicants must be single, between twenty-one and twenty-eight years of age, of "smart, well-groomed appearance, good carriage and pleasant personality," and of "a high standard of physical fitness with reasonable relationship between height and weight and good eye-sight," and with a "good all-round General Certificate of Education at ordinary level." "What we want really," Mr. Lawrence explained, "are charming, intelligent young women with good figures and pleasant faces who don't mind living out of a ruddy suit-case. And we get them." He was so right.

During their eight weeks at London Airport the trainees undergo what Mr. Lawrence claims is the most intensive course of its kind anywhere in the world.

The curriculum includes lectures, discussions, demonstrations and exercises covering the theory and practice of "passenger recognition" (a passenger in Mohammedan dress, for example, might expect a stewardess to understand about Mohammedan dietary laws and adjust his menu accordingly), passenger conversation (how to chat courteously without being distracted too long from other duties), emergency equipment for Arctic, jungle, desert and marine survival ("without melodrama"), the care and service of wines (with special attention to "champagnization" and the art of cork withdrawal), "disorientation in space," "the effects of explosive decompression," "the effects of oxygen lack" and "the causes of air sickness," insects and insecticides (the lecture on mosquitoes, sand-flies, fleas, lice, ticks, tsetse flies, bugs, cockroaches, snakes, scorpions, etc., is followed by a fifteen-minute tea break), what to avoid in native bazaars and why, the use of cosmetics (with a full day at Elizabeth Arden's), the care of children (with a full day at an L.C.C. day nursery) and of V.I.P.s and Queen's Messengers, elocution and microphone

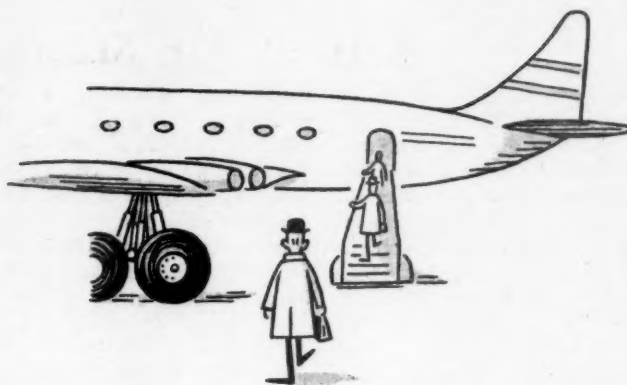


technique (with special attention to labials and gutturals and to the "opening gambit," "the punch line" and the confidence of announcements), the preparation and service of food (including menu recognition, especially in English and French), first aid (particularly sudden unexpected mid-air midwifery), and all sorts of necessary red tape, for customs and immigration authorities and B.O.A.C. itself. Mr. Lawrence and his assistants give the trainees special hints on how to make use of a gentle sort of psychological judo that helps stewardesses sweetly but effectively to oppose unruly and unreasonable passengers without making them feel as though they are being thwarted.

The day I visited the school a lecture was being given on aircraft "delays and diversions" caused by mechanical difficulties or bad weather. There were twenty-two assorted young women, red-heads, blondes and brunettes, including an Indian and a Chinese who were being trained for local duties on Far Eastern routes. At first the students making notes at rows of desks, the instructor at her lectern, and the blackboard gave an impression of an ordinary classroom. But the instructor was a stewardess in uniform with the tarnished golden wing of seniority; the only word on the blackboard was CINZANO, in red chalk; beside the board there was a poster saying "From Orchids to Elephants, Fly Your Cargo by B.O.A.C.," and jets kept flying past just outside the window with the roar of a blast furnace.

The instructor had just been telling them how a stewardess's duty was unfinished until she delivered her passengers safely to their destination, even if part of the journey had to be undertaken in trains or buses. First-Class passengers were to be allowed free drinks on the way. All passengers were allowed to send free telegrams after unscheduled stops. "Whatever happens," she said, "you mustn't let them suffer any avoidable discomforts, and even after as many as twenty hours on duty you must keep on smiling. There must never be any loss of faith in B.O.A.C. In other words, always remember our motto—which is?" "B.O.A.C. Takes Good Care of You," the would-be stewardesses gaily chanted in unison.

Much of the practical training takes



place in the Emu, a structure whose name was derived from the Experimental Mock-Up and suitably also suggests a bird that cannot fly. The Emu is a full-scale facsimile of the fuselage of the biggest passenger aircraft now in service with the Corporation and the configuration of galleys and seats can be arranged as needed to resemble the interior of a Comet or a Boeing 707 or a Britannia.

When I arrived there, at 12.45 a.m.,

the trainees were serving Tourist breakfasts in the front of the mock-up and First-Class luncheons in the rear. The press officer and I sat at the back, and after I had managed to overcome the impulse to fasten my seat-belt I looked up in time to see a wonderful sight. A seventh-week trainee, Miss Mollie Hall, flaxen of hair, blue of eye and pink of cheek, and manifesting the most eminently reasonable relationship between height and weight, came slowly

down the aisle pushing towards us a trolley laden with bottles. "Would you care for a cocktail before lunch?" she asked with a smile that suggested that her day would be so much brighter if our answer was yes. We did care for cocktails; and with the roast lamb we cared for some red Bordeaux; and after our pineapple and cheese and coffee we cared for brandy. Can higher tribute be paid to Miss Hall than to report that we never burst into tears, not once, even though the contents of every

training bottle of liquor and wine contained nothing but ordinary cold water?

Then another trainee in peerlessly dulcet tones instructed us to stop smoking as we were about to land at Idlewild, New York. The local time was 9 a.m., she said, and the temperature was 75°, and she hoped that her colleagues and she would have an opportunity to serve us again. Driving back to London half an hour later, I hoped so too.

Platonic Dialogues

By SIRIOL HUGH-JONES

IT'S widely known that in England you have to walk a long stony road, ferreting among the brambles and peering carefully into the sukebind, to find a man who not only understands about women but doesn't care a fig if the news gets about. For my money there is at present no man more enlightened, liberal, perspicacious and reasonable than Judge Geoffrey Howard, all of seventy splendid years old, who only the other day remarked "As a single man I resent the inference that is always being drawn in the divorce courts that it is practically impossible to have a friendship with a woman without committing adultery with her. A man might be having a few conversations with her."

Think the whole thing over calmly and it becomes clearer every minute that one of the things women are best at, besides standing for Parliament, investing their money wisely, taming lions and cooking three-course meals at all times of the day or night, is just being darling friends, especially over a touch of conversation. If more men grasped this simple fact there would be fewer tears before bedtime, less fees for lawyers, and nothing to talk about at cocktail parties. Like everything else in life it involves a practised knack and a certain amount of getting used to. Basically insecure, adultery-prone men aiming to take it up before the year is out should set aside three minutes every

morning for repeating in front of an open window in a loud confident tone "Every day and in almost every way more and more women want to be just friends with me and have a few conversations," and then sit back and watch the magic work.

From the earliest stages English women deeply long to be friends with men, and no amount of wallop in the eye with lolly sticks on the way home from school will rid them of this wistful thought. To be friends with a woman under seven years of age all that is necessary is to show interest in the gap where her tooth fell out and let her have the last chocolate biscuit wrapped in silver paper. It's later on that things begin to get unnecessarily complicated.

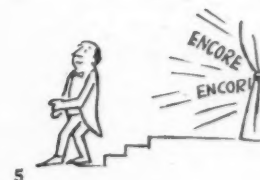
Adult women wear their fingers to the bone trying to get on to friendly terms with men. To this end they furnish neat flats with comfortable chairs and indirect lighting and lots of little tables strewn with pots of flowers and ash trays and fill their larders with excellent tinned foods in the hope that some non-hostile man might drop by for a few conversations. They also study closely any amount of literature on how to converse with men in a sympathetic manner. This is quite an art, and has nothing to do with showing off about your shorthand speed or putting forward any odd idea you may have lying around about the Theme of Affirmation in the *œuvre* of Wesker.



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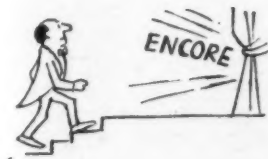
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The conversation trick is played by sitting mousy-quiet and listening with hypnotic attentiveness, while from time to time hurrying unobtrusively back and forth with fresh relays of tinned foods.

At parties women betray a piteous eagerness to hold friendly talk, huddling in a modest manner in that half of the room reserved for female persons and falling automatically into an eager listening attitude should any gentleman accidentally cross the invisible frontier. (Most Englishmen, acutely aware of the banked fires latent behind their cool asbestos exteriors, are keen to avoid exposure to adultery at parties, and hence only feel safe during the relaxed half-hour after the ladies' eyes have been collected.)

Abroad, where they have a brisker, clearer, altogether more sharply defined notion of the difference between adultery and conversation, the two activities do not overlap in the woolly and nervous English manner, and men and women can often be seen exchanging views on this and that and passing the time of day without constantly scanning the horizon for any passing private detective. In England, where passions are so easily inflamed, any man bold enough to risk being discovered talking openly to a woman knows he is at once honour bound to carry the thing a great deal farther, which is one of the reasons why Byron, a keen talker in his time, was forced eventually to save what was left of his strength and peace of mind by fleeing to the Continent, where conversation without a lot of unpleasant litigation has always been permissible. The only small comfort is that things were always a great deal worse in Scotland, where Mary Stewart had only to hold a few conversations, in French at that, with her private

secretary for a whole posse of noisy nobles to burst through the arras and cut the wretched chatterer up with dirks and claymores.

One must not of course hope for dramatic changes during the next half century or so, though with caution and wariness it should be possible to train men to utter a few tentative phrases, always provided the female listener stays perfectly still and makes no sudden lunging movement likely to make him ring for his solicitor on the spot. Hold out a hand gently and calmly, and if he doesn't bite it right away you may try speaking a few words in a level, soothing tone of voice. A good meal should be served, in silence, almost immediately. Once you have really won his confidence you may well look forward to a lifetime's fascinated listening on all sorts of lively topics such as horse-racing, cars, and the significance of the Pause in the *œuvre* of Pinter. There may yet come a time when everyone will accept "We are just good friends" to mean "We are having a few conversations." If we beaver away at it hard enough it may prove to be the most startling change in the British way of life for the past five centuries.

Isolationist

MY father was a lonely man;
None of us bothered much
about him
Until our pleasures we out-ran
And felt we could not do without him,
When to our deep concern we found
It bored him having us around.

— WILLIAM CLARKE



13

Odd Jobs

3. Shorts Reviewer

By ANGELA MILNE

ONE Fine Day, Years Ago. What amazing luck! Am just saying at breakfast that a part-time job would be nice, as have been saying for past week, when this letter from a friend arrives asking me to be a Shorts Reviewer!

Short films. Friend says that an organization of small cinema owners would like me to go round Wardour Street seeing all shorts, that is all films under 3000 feet (fancy, that's what shorts are!) and report on them so that small owners know what to book for their programmes. How fascinating, unique, unregimented a task! How shall sway destiny of this enormously significant art-form!

Week Later. First invitation arrives, nicely set-out jellygraph announcing that *Island of Delight*, 1191 feet, British made, U Certificate, is to be shown to the trade at the Valuable Film Distributors' Own Theatre in Wardour Street on Thursday at 10.30 a.m. Prop accompanying though unconnected poster, of dinosaur with arm round Empire State Building (8508 feet), on bookshelf and buy notebook.

Thursday. Take 19 bus to Shaftesbury Avenue, trudge Wardour Street for Valuable's wrought copper swing-doors. Am directed past hydrangeas and dinosaur, down stone steps, along passage full of stacked tables. An exciting venue! Own Theatre has red arrow, push-door, four rows of six hard leather tip-up seats and boy in back row.

Boy greets me with typed hand-out, disappears. Choose seat, sit with notebook at the ready and critical faculties ablaze as the censor's certificate flickers on curtains, curtains draw back, with roar of million decibels *Island of Delight* bursts on eerie solitude. Actually when lights go up see that back row has filled, but they all look as if they made the film so sense of solitary power is if anything fed. Give them, hope, right smile of congratulatory thanks, pop round corner for a cup of tea at Jolly Jim's to end a busy twenty minutes.

Am typing Synopsis that evening when hear latchkey. Say listen to this. *This film takes us on a short tour round the island of Guernsey, its coastline, the ancient streets and big modern hotels of the capital, whatever capital is, must check, its inland scenery with combine harvester at work, its fishermen plying their trade and mending lobster-pots, a happy picnic party and a glimpse of some seagulls.*

Now, I say, do I recommend it?

Voice inside evening paper says vaguely why not, it sounds just like all the others.

That's what I mean, I say, should I not tell Small Owners to break away, be different, eschew run-of-the-mill stuff, thus eventually forcing shorts-makers to the high standard possible in this significant art-form?

Use loaf, says evening paper, do I want to keep the job?

So I type *An adequate example of its kind which audiences should enjoy*, and consider that I have got the hang of this shorts reviewing business.

Month Later. Tuesday is the Day in the shorts-trade show world. Rush into P.N.K.'s Own Theatre, v. plush and luxury, being two minutes late fall down steps in dark and over feet to find empty seat, see eight and a half cat-mouse cartoons, beat it to Singular Theatre, a small hireable drill hall above a tailor's shop, for Esteemed's two mother-in-law comedies, then shopping and sandwich at Jolly Jim's and then round corner to Leicester Square where in real cinema among hundreds of trade see *Hawaiian Idyll*, 631 feet, running time approx. six minutes, and even as electric guitars throb round THE END am out of Circle exit-door with shopping bag, explaining to hurt commissioner why not staying for big film, drawing breath, darting off, nipping round fat men reading *Figaro* on pavement, dodging mat-shaking Chinese waiters, diving through swing-doors, past stills and paper roses and typists to stone steps, laundry baskets, whirr of projector, red arrow, push-door. Flop into seat, whew! On screen turbanned mouse plays pipe, tail of hidden cat does snake act, and if this is really *Indian Shove Lyric* then am in time for five more, and can see why job is partly piece-work.

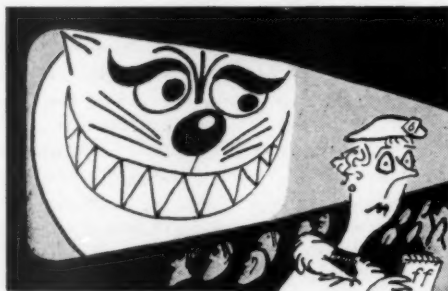
That Evening. When sit down to type out notes, as is custom before composing reports, am horrified to find that for *Indian Shove Lyric* must have used the broken-off end of double-pointed pencil because that page is a blank. So is mind, apart from that solitary snake-charming shot imprinted on the mind's eye.

Stop raking memory, start on next film.

Cat buys magic cheese, will make mouse bigger, unable to get back in hole. But mouse's uncle has come to stay, is gourmet, eats two slices, grows big as kangaroo? legs pouch? No, kang is now genuine kang escaped from zoo, mouse's uncle been caught by zoo keepers. Trapdoor piano-wires chute fridge.

So Shove Lyric wasn't the uncle. Or the drawbridge, that was *Meddy-evil Mouse*. Oh well, must have a shot at it.

Consider finished report on Shove Lyric a masterpiece. *An amusing cartoon wherein a mouse, clad in a turban, plays*



a tune on a pipe—the "snake" being, unknown to him, his old enemy the cat, hidden from sight. Remarks: Quite up to standard.

Months Later. Why not, am saying at breakfast, get off at Swan & Edgar, nip up Glasshouse Street and into Wardour Street from side? Would this save those vital two minutes I am always late by?

Or, says morning paper, could leave here two minutes sooner. Better still, three.

Am stung into setting off a whole ten minutes early, thus arriving at the O.T. (as we in the trade call an Own Theatre) in time to enjoy first full view of fellow-members of audience. Solitude of *Island of Delight* was exceptional, to-day the average six are dotted round me, hard-bitten men who keep on their overcoats and turn creakingly in their seats for a chat. Rather cherish these figures of mystery. Don't want to know either about sweet fragile old lady in front row. Man next to me says I know who *she* is, of course? Then he tells me. An exhibitor's widow who for old time's sake visits any trade show going, of any film, morning, afternoon, every day, every week, all the blooming time, he says, year in, year out, it's her life.

Gaze at this frail figure and try to imagine it. Lapping up the footage, never mind what as long as it's a film, sitting here in the dark where the real world is, then out into the cruel shadows of life to get through the evening somehow—what a story is here . . .

Come to with a jerk. On the screen a mouse in an apron is working a cat up and down on a pulley over Niagara Falls and I haven't an idea how it all started. Pencil, pen, anything I can scribble with on the programme, quick!

Later, deciphering palimpsest, fall to wondering when the hard-bitten men will start pointing me out as the one who writes with eyebrow-pencil and eats penny buns.

One Wet Friday. Realize that occupational rot is setting in. Effects include:

Not wanting to go ever to Florida, Bahamas, Hot Springs or anywhere containing model-girls posed at airfield, swimming pool, bar:

Developing smouldering detestation of innocent Viareggians making big cardboard heads for forthcoming carnival:

Getting confused idea that in States golf is played only blindfold, or with midget clubs and giant balls, or with rubber-shafted clubs and foot-high tees, or by film stars for charity:

Brooding in buses on why, with whole of creation at cartoon-makers' disposal, they see world as bulbous-faced animals playing tricks on each other:

Thinking that funny men in two-reel comedies are now and then funny:

Sulking about all the things could be doing with morning if did not have to spend sixty minutes getting to and from ten-minute film:

Running out of ways of saying *Good enough entertainment, will be enjoyed by average audience*, in fact getting sick of writing deathful prose that never see again.

When and how will job end, that's what want to know.

Another Wet Friday. Still want to know. Am pounding down Wardour Street now, from Tottenham Court Road and through Soho Square and round side turning and telephone box. Yes, live north of London these days, that's one of the ways life has changed over the years, but am still hurrying through swing-doors two minutes late, still seeing *Caribbean*



the well.

"I've forgotten more about gardening than you'll ever know, my lad."

Capers and *The Mouse that Jack Built* and that damned *Furry Dance*.

But somehow the job isn't the same. Clichés have if anything got better since passed 10,000th variation on *Will score a hit with all filmgoers*, but for last few years have not been too sure they're being used. Am beginning, indeed, to wonder if the Small Owners really want me. Friend has emigrated but another contact did hear something about them being reorganized and not needing reports, not really. Oh yes, they're still paying me, and as long as I get my cheque I'll go on posting my reports, toiling, toiling, writing *Dog juggles with hedgehogs* in lipstick and sucking fruit gums.

But how hard that is, with the anonymity, the illusoriness of this life settling on one like grey ectoplasm!—as one slips as hastily out of a performance now as into it, being neurotically suspicious that Small Owners lurk in every O.T. waiting to pounce and cry Got you you're fired!

Monday. Got sack! Been given month's notice!

Wardour Street looks quite beautiful this morning. What splendid lunch-smells waft through restaurant gratings, how gaily shine the wholesale sequins, how exciting is the plunge from the busy day into the cool dark corridor past the barrels and the film-spools to the red arrow of this dear old O.T.! Just the eight of us here as usual (I can see in the dark now) and a nice empty seat at the end of the middle row, my seat, and on the screen—ah, I know this one backwards, it's about the Canaries I'd say, or Madeira, I'll get the exact island in a minute, and it's showing us the coastline, the ancient streets and big hotels, the local industries, the fishermen, a happy tourist party, the wild life . . . It's all so dear, so familiar, a kind of little world of its own, here in the dark. Difficult to describe, the fascination of it, but it's yes, I can see exactly what it is. It's time I got out.

Next week: *Exhibitionist*, by Richard Buckle

The Case of the Missing Manholes

By PATRICK RYAN

DIRECTLY I saw the column-filler in the *Daily Telegraph* I knew it was only a matter of time before they'd be sending for me:

Thief Sets Road Problem

To the normal hazards of driving in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has been added a new peril. A thief has stolen 40 iron covers, each weighing about 1 cwt., from sewer manholes.

Who else was there for a job like that?

... Perry Mason was in court all month, Marlowe was up at the hospital having his ears stitched back on, and Wolfe had the Japanese blight on his *Laelia purpurata*. And, the way we private eyes have the market cut up, manhole covers are clearly in my bailiwick. Maigret, Campion, and Abbott are all right on the small stuff

like jewellery, murderers or folding money, but if you lose anything big and heavy like a statue of George III or a bronze pagoda or forty iron covers each weighing 1 cwt., then I'm the jasper for your mess of trouble. I made my name in the heavyweight line when I got the Delaney Brothers, the world's greatest street furniture thieves, for stealing trams and drinking-fountains from the City of Glasgow. Before the Lord Provost called me in, you couldn't get a ride or a drink of water the whole length and breadth of Sauchiehall Street.

Oklahoma cabled me four days later and I flew into Tulsa. They roared me with sirens to City Hall. In every room they took me through there were policemen with plates before them . . . eating, eating, eating.

"Thank God, you've come!" said the Chief. He'd clearly given his all to the community and slept in his clothes for a week. Or else he'd a hangover and a three-fingered tailor.

"Line of duty," I said. "Just give me the facts. How many manholes have you got in Tulsa, Oklahoma?"

"Four hundred and thirteen."

"What shape are they?"

"Circular."

"And how many still got covers on?"

"Four."

"Then you've lost four hundred and nine?"

"No. Twelve hundred and thirty-five. We're working on our second set of replacements."

The telephone rang and he answered it. "Twelve hundred and thirty-six," he said. "Another one went last night over on Mohawk Avenue."

"How many replacements have you got left?"

"None. When the last one goes we'll not be able to kidaroo any longer." He sighed deeply. "And the elections coming up next week. I'll be on the bread-line in fourteen days."

"What story are you giving the peasants?"

"We tell them some guy's been selling them for scrap. But we got the scrap market sewn up tight and there's not a solitary sewer-lid been sold. I

got the railroads and the highways blocked and there's not one got out of the county on wheels. What are they doing with the damned great cast-iron monsters? That's what I want to know!" He drummed on the table with his fists like a berserk bongo-beater. "What the hell does anyone *want* with twelve hundred and thirty-six manhole covers? I tell you, it's driving me stark, staring mad!"

Cracking under the strain, that's what he was.

"Steady, Chief. I'm here now. Just the facts, that's all I want. Papers said about the traffic peril. How are the drivers standing up to it?"

"Drivers? . . . Never mind the blasted drivers. I'm losing policemen. A dozen every night. The force is being decimated daily."

"How come?"

"Patrolling their beats in the dark, heads up and stepping lively, they don't see where new covers are gone and they're going down those manholes like pearl-divers. The thin ones go straight down without touching the sides. The fat ones, thanks be, stick in the top of the hole. I daren't put a thin man out at night and the fat ones have to do double patrol. So they're beginning to lose weight now, as well . . ."

"Like Caesar," I said, "you want men about you that are fat."

I like to put in these literary quips; they distinguish me from the uneducated dicks.

"Come again?" said the Chief.

"Never mind. How do they get the covers off the manholes?"

"God knows. I don't. They just vanish during the night."

"Any leads?"

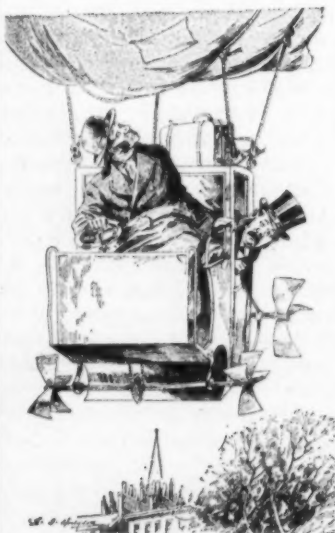
"Not one. First, we thought it was the beatniks. Some sort of protest maybe. But there ain't one of them strong enough to lift himself out of bed. Then we thought it might be Orson Welles loose down in the sewers."

The telephone rang again.

"Twelve hundred and thirty-seven," he groaned. "And two drum majorettes leading my nomination parade have just gone down on Arkansas Street. I

THEN AS NOW

Vertical take-off still seems to be an ungainly novelty.



A COMING TERROR

Fare. "I SAY WHAT'S GONE WRONG? WHY ARE WE GOING DOWN HERE?"

Santos 1001. "GOT A PUNCTURE, SIR! ONE O' THEM 'ERE WIRELESS TELEGRAMS, I EXPECT, GONE SLAP THROUGH MY BALLOON."

July 9 1902

might just as well cut my throat right away . . ."

"Bear up, Chief," I said bluffly. "I'm off on the job now."

I strode purposefully out on to the sidewalk and went straight down a manhole. Fortunately, I am thick-through and jammed in the top.

They cleared the area for me while I fixed my patent Bleep to the underside of the last remaining manhole cover in Tulsa, Oklahoma. No bigger than the average snail, the Bleep is an isotope-transistor device which transmits continual signals to my wrist-radio. When at rest, it goes bleep-bleep-bleep all the livelong day; anybody moves it and it plays "Hearts and Flowers."

For two nights and a day that bleeping sewer-lid kept me awake. Then, just as I was getting to look like the Chief, it broke into waltz-time at four o'clock in the morning. I leapt to the window and saw the final manhole cover disappearing up into the darkness of the sky, suspended at the end of a cable.

"A helicopter and electro magnets," I murmured. "What devilish ingenuity. Even the ranks of Tuscany . . ."

"Come again," said the Chief.

We picked up the signal on the police-car radio and tracked it through the night, across Mohawk Park, on past the forest of derricks and out into the wild lands. It was breaking dawn when the quarry went bleep-bleep-bleep again and we knew it was down and at rest. We stalked it to the mouth of a canyon.

"Get the place surrounded, Chief," I said. "I'm going in there alone."

The canyon opened out inside, and there were two men sitting on a pneumatic bed eating pineapple out of the can.

It was those bloody Delaneys again.

"Whadda you want?" asked Big Mike.

"Twelve hundred and thirty-eight manhole covers. The jig's up, Delaney."

"Search the place," invited Grey Seumas. "You won't find no manhole covers nowhere."

A helicopter took off somewhere down the gorge and droned overhead.

"All right. So you've shipped all the stuff out of here. But I'm on to your hide-out now. You've taken your last lid in this city . . . And tell me, just for the record, why manhole covers? And why Tulsa, Oklahoma?"



"Good gracious, madam! It's five minutes past midnight."

Big Mike tossed his empty tin at me. It hit me on the knee but I just stood there and took it.

"Swankiest city I ever saw," he said.

"Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Oil Capital of the World. Finest street furniture in the whole United States. Manhole covers of top-grade steel. Bevel down one edge and drill a hole in the middle and what have you got?"

"What?"

"Wheels for locomotives. They pay eighty dollars for a locomotive wheel on the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fé."

"Sandwich a manhole cover between two three-inch layers of concrete," said Seumas, "and you got yourself a genuine Civil War mill-stone that ground corn for Honest Abe himself. Hundred and twenty dollars each in Massachusetts."

"Two manhole covers with a bar in between and you've got Professor

Sholto's Weight-lifting and Body-Building Set," countered Mike. "Clip this coupon and have a torso like mine. Good for fifty-two dollars on the back page of any magazine . . . And then, of course, there's the export market."

"Export?" I said. "Who to?"

Seumas put a knowing finger at the side of his nose.

"Them," he said.

"My God!" I said. "Not the Russians?"

"And who else? Why do you think all them trawlers is hanging around for?"

"But what do they want manhole covers for?"

Big Mike chuckled.

"Conning-tower lids for midget submarines, tops for flying saucers, base-plugs for space-rockets, any number of scientific things . . . They're clever are those Russkies and we're not asking too many questions at four hundred bucks a sewer-lid, f.o.b."

"That's an Un-American Activity," I said. "I'm taking you both in for that."

"Not to-night, brother," said Seumas and threw the last of his pineapple juice in my face. I heard the helicopter sweep down and, as the veil of syrup cleared from my eyes, I saw the pair of them climbing up a rope ladder and swinging out over the lip of the canyon.

I walked back to the Chief. "Your troubles are over," I said. "You can refit the whole city with confidence. Just so long as you change over to square manholes this time."

"Why square ones?"

"Because you can't make locomotive wheels, mill-stones, bar-bells, flying saucer tops, submarine lids or rocket plugs out of square manhole covers..."

They took my advice and they never lost one again. So, if ever you're in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and anyone asks you why all the manhole covers are squares, you'll be able to tell them, won't you?



"We can't get her off. The doctor says it's a father fixation."

How the Rhino Got the Hump

"A rhinoceros charging Mr. Rupert Fothergill, a game ranger, on a raft at Lake Kariba, Southern Rhodesia, after it had been untied by rescuers who had taken the animal from an island formed by the rising waters of the artificial lake. Mr. Fothergill drove it off by hitting it with his hat. Before the rhinoceros was moved, a game ranger (below) injected it with a tranquillizer, but the effects wore off sooner than was expected."

Daily Telegraph caption

I CAN remember what I was. Whence come these ropes and chains? Why is Kariba rising? It's two months off to the rains.

I have faced the spears of tribesmen: I have charged the hunter's gun: I have stood the worst of the summer's thirst when the pools have dried in the sun. But damn these men with syringes when, on a man-made Ararat, They get me down with a tranquillizer, and fend me off with a hat!

In the years of Allan Quatermain, Selous and Hemingway

I could choose to fight or fade from sight to fight on another day.

They wanted my head for a trophy, or my hide for sjambok whips,

Or my final throes in a gush of prose for their various authorships.

Or . . . it's quite an accepted story that this nose-ridge horn of ours

Produces a ground-up glory of aphrodisiac powers.

Well, so much the better for humans, and so much the worse for us

If the Lord disposes above our noses this death-fraught, birth-fraught plus.

We took these men and menaces then gallantly in our stride

And as three-ton bush-bred monarchs worthily lived . . . and died.

The ultimate degradation was for those of our species whose

Unfortunate fates were to go into crates and get emptied out into zoos.

But now . . . is my face red, brothers? . . . they have captured *and let me go*,

And there isn't a mark on me, hide nor hair, as a battle scar to show.

The African veldt, I have always felt, lacks peaks (it is not like Darien):

Floods may be O.K. for a hippo, say, but a rhino is non-riparian.

I stood on a mound of diminishing ground and men approached on a raft;

They noosed my feet with ropes and chains and hobbled me fore and aft.

I kicked and fought as the waters rose, but they tipped me on to my side

And jabbed a needle of tranquillizer under my wrinkled hide.

Did I feel like a jungle monarch then, with the juice lapping into my brain?

I did not, and I know I can never feel like a jungle monarch again.

A white game ranger called Fothergill (not Strickland or Carruthers)

Had a black syringe-kit-bearer-assistant with him, and several others.

And Fothergill, I noticed till I got cross-eyed and dopey,

Was wearing a floppy linen hat instead of the proper topee.

And instead of a bush-shirt bandoliered with cartridges in pouches,

He was bare to the waist and in shorts and shoes, as the photograph of it vouches.

(And that wasn't the least depressing thing in the whole depressing mess . . .

A cameraman with flash-in-the-pan taking photographs for the press!)

Well, it seems that my "shot" of juice was not so strong as my captors hoped.

They'd ferried me over to safe dry land and dumped me, as they thought, doped,

Untied my feet and, their job complete, had turned and started to pack

To be ready to pole their raft away . . . *when I rose with a roar to attack!*

But the waters caught my legs athwart, and a mist was over my eyes,

And I thought that my head must be made of lead and treble its normal size.

I was groggy still, and Fothergill, to my deep, lifelong disgrace,

Was able to stop my headlong rush by flapping his hat in my face!

I have often felt that the African veldt was losing its mystery

With Armand and Michaela, Van der Post and all of us on TV.

But . . . caught and bound and left on the ground and pushed in the face with a hat,

And a subpachydermatous Mickey Finn . . . I'll never get over that!

— RICHARD USBORNE

Under Which Flag?

By J. E. HINDER

"Of the Ethiopians I have seen insufficient to pass judgment . . . It appears that they were not all clear about the object of their journey . . ."
—Brigadier W. F. K. Thompson in the Daily Telegraph, discussing the U.N. forces in the Congo.

THE crisis caused in a suburb of Leopoldville (where power has been cut off for some time) by the Eskimo contingent's consumption of all supplies of candles has been satisfactorily settled, according to U.N. headquarters here. On the other hand, the mysterious Welsh detachment which marched through the Luluabourg area carrying a banner inscribed "Resign, Mrs. Rachel Jones!" has turned up again at a tribal gathering near the capital. Wearing bardic robes, the Welsh delighted a large audience of Congolese with a spirited rendering of "Men of Harlech." Dr. Bunche is reported to have said that they do not come under his jurisdiction.

The large Chinese unit reported to be advancing inland has proved to be a touring company of *Flower Drum Song*. The touring manager, Mr. Coolidge O'Kritzky, told reporters that they had played to capacity houses in one-night-stands. "We aim to prove," he said, "that if you've got a good show it'll pull them in, no matter what colour or creed." The U.S. State Department has formally disowned the North American Indian group under Chief Babbit Smallshower. A spokesman told reporters: "We can put up with the Moscow Circus but a bunch of vaudeville wrestlers is carrying it too far." The Redskins are said to be "happy and fraternizing."

The fourteen bearded men and women found wandering in the jungle by a detachment of the efficient Ghanaians are British. Described as "either beatniks or Aldermaston marchers," they are now being cared for by the Polynesian Red Cross. Once again the Tristan da Cunha Frontier Force went into action yesterday against

Anglo-Japanese speculative builders, reported to be clearing a site in Katanga. They found a queue of eager buyers waiting to put their names down for a bungalow. Many were British immigrants. Some of the women carried babies.

The latest arrivals in the Congo are the representatives of the new Republic of Mbokuland under Major Franklin Delano Kubu. They appeared to be well equipped with Czech transport and American Civil War small arms but had no boots. Troops of all nations are in good heart and on friendly terms with each other. A small fracas at the airport proved to have a simple explanation. Byelo-Russian mechanics complained of a group of Trotskyists near their aircraft. The men turned out to be Congolese students disguised as Lithuanian signallers, apparently believing that this would facilitate their airlifting to Moscow for a free course of studies at the University. They took refuge in the hotel reserved for the Anglo-American press. One of them has since announced his engagement to the Teenage Correspondent of the *Daily Wretch*, according to that paper.

A correction has, incidentally, been received from Dyak H.Q. It reads: "The statement that the British Military Attaché in Leopoldville was eaten by the C.O., Dyak Expeditionary Force, should have read 'was at Eton with the C.O.' We regret any embarrassment caused to either party."

☆

Over to You—Over

"During the year it will be presenting films that have been given the Official Censor's certificate but it will not deny the cinema going public the opportunity of seeing the work of fine directors whose adult themes cannot allow normal public presentation . . . these of course will be shown with the fullest approval of the Censor in order to alleviate any doubts as to the touch of dignity with which the Compton will surely be enhanced."

Publicity sheet about a new cinema



"You struck me!"

Wish You Were Here

Trieste

LEFT England towing behind car ancient bow-legged caravan with movement bucking bronco might envy; greeted by continental drivers with hilarity. Springs collapsed at Ostend and, in time to reach remote village, tyre burst loudly. Nearest garage closed (Sunday). Next day, National Holiday: all unmarried girls dressed up as angels; our status dubious so remained in slacks. Only mechanic, rather tight, deigned to leave both beer and local band to mend caravan. Given heartwarming send-off by entire village. Caravan wheels now turned in instead of out, but eerie clanking noise turned out to be beer-mug which mechanic forgot to remove from back axle. Heaved ourselves over Brenner Pass, arrived Lake Garda (camp, though not postilion, struck by lightning first night.) Left for Venice, but my Yugoslav boat had decided not to leave from there, as advertised, but from Trieste, so must dash.

— J. M.



"Proputty, Proputty, Proputty"

THAT is what the Stock Exchange has been hearing in recent times. Over the past nine years the value of ordinary shares in property companies has risen ninefold. To give one fantastic example—an investment twelve years ago of £300 in Mansion House Chambers Ltd., which was the original keystone of what is now City Centre Properties, would to-day be worth £150,000. To which one must reply that there can be very few investors who would have had the combination of tenacity and greed which would allow them to leave that original investment undisturbed. This kind of appreciation is only secured by those who live in the bliss of ignorance and whose share certificates have lain dormant in some never opened black box.

But even without looking for such abnormalities the recent history of property investment has been spectacular enough and if we are to believe some of the investment specialists there is still plenty of juice to be squeezed out of that orange. The basis of this boom lies in the fact that property enterprise was necessarily dormant during the war and immediate post-war years. It is now in a state of expansion which in large part represents the making up of arrears. Profits were held back by rent control and also by the inevitable restrictions that were placed on the building industry. This was therefore part of the investment market in which a considerable dam had been built holding back prices.

That dam has now broken and a dramatic change has come over the position. One of the reasons for the extent of the rise in this part of the market is to be found in the little word "gearing"—which had better be explained. A company with a highly geared capital is one in which there is a relatively large amount of fixed interest capital and a correspondingly small proportion of ordinary or equity shares. In an imaginary company in which there

is say £1m. of debenture and preference capital bearing an average rate of interest of 5 per cent and £100,000 of ordinary or equity capital the gearing is high. If the profits available for distribution represent 5 per cent of the total capital then all, including the holders of ordinary shares, will get 5 per cent. But if the distributable profit doubles then the amount available for the small ordinary capital will go up from 5 to 60 per cent. Conversely in these circumstances of gearing the profit would not have to decline very much before wiping out completely the amount available for ordinary dividends.

This example of high gearing is as nothing compared with the gearing of most property companies. In their case it devolves not so much from the structure of their capital as from the method of financing their development schemes. It is not uncommon to find companies with a nominal capital of £500,000 or so undertaking contracts with a final value of £10m., nearly all of

which is financed by banks or insurance companies.

Of the property companies which have gone ahead most satisfactorily recently and which show every promise of continuing their dynamic course, let brief mention be made of two. There are City Centre Properties, whose presiding genius is Mr. Jack Cotton, and City & Central Investments, which is in the competent hands of Mr. Charles Clore.

City Centre has some powerful backers including the Pearl, Legal & General and Barclays D.C.O. It is building skyscrapers in New York as well as revamping Piccadilly Circus. City & Central Investments has recently completed some major redevelopment in the square mile of the City and is also planning the skyscraper hotel which will alter the Park Lane skyline. Whether it is for better or for worse as regards the skyline, it looks like being better for investors in Mr. Clore's company. — LOMBARD LANE

* * *

In the Country



Stable Companions

SOME sociologist should do more research on why there are so few divorces in the countryside compared with those in the towns.

The superficial reasons may be misleading. It is, of course, silly to suggest that adult couples in Devonshire or Yorkshire have more stable or amenable temperaments than those in London or Manchester. It is equally fatuous to say that the former, by being isolated from some urban distractions, are thereby immune to all human temptations. Nor would it be very helpful to dismiss the question by saying that the Church or religion has greater influence on country people. That may be true in some small degree; but it is quite insufficient to account for anything like the large discrepancy in the figures.

It appears that of 25,000 divorces last year only 3 per cent were between people from agriculture. Does this mean that farmers and their wives are more mature than people in other types of

work? Or is it because they work so hard that they have not the time to quarrel or form other attachments? The answer to that is that time has never prevented a quarrel; and there has never been a hedge high enough to dissuade a man from looking over it.

But, clearly, unless the statistics are fortuitous, there must be some factor to explain them. Could it be that in the country people have some sense of value for continuity of which those who live in cities are deprived? And that this value, though it may be care for things growing, and for things living, flows over into an appreciation for continuity within human relationships, too?

Or could it be that the excessive ups and downs in agriculture economically, the uncertainty of the weather, and the lack of security in it as a profession, give its members a tolerance and endurance to each other, too?

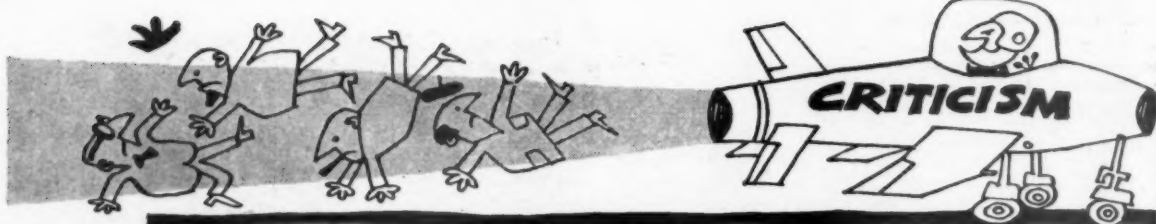
Perhaps the answer is in the farm itself. I wonder whether the reason is not this: that because the place has an identity, almost a personality of its own, the farmer and his wife are then able to make their own temperaments subservient to it. In other words, the farm stands as parent, and they, as children, are able to relate to it. Or should we look at the nature of the work? Is it that farming is a kind of therapy to internal stress? Are other people driven to divorce because they cannot rush out and slash at a bed of nettles or chop down a couple of trees? Perhaps all of these reasons contribute, but there must be others, too. — RONALD DUNCAN



PLAYS IN THE PARK



LARRY



AT THE FESTIVAL

Beyond the Fringe (LYCEUM)
Romulus the Great (GATEWAY)
Les Trois Mousquetaires (LYCEUM)
Wallenstein (GARTSHORE HALL)

THIS year's Festival seems no improvement, theatrically, on its predecessor, but at least it can boast one notably brilliant item which is not as yet billed to be seen in London. Just as last year Flanders and Swann stole the glory, so this year the official late-night revue, *Beyond the Fringe*, was by common consent acknowledged to be the brightest thing in Edinburgh.

Put on by four young amateurs from Oxford and Cambridge, it was so startlingly original that the rare spectacle could be enjoyed of hardened critics dashing the tears from their streaming eyes. It was led by Jonathan Miller, whom we knew from his Footlights' performances to be a comic quite out of the ordinary; in these combined operations lunacy was unconfined and yet their satire hit target after target with deadly accuracy. Mr. Miller gave a wonderful imitation of Professor Ayer being televised, and reproduced to the life the stirring tones of the P.M.; but his most

overwhelming turn was a rambling explanation of how four hundred pairs of blue corduroy trousers found their way to the Lost Property Office. At times the influence on him of Danny Kaye is noticeable, as when he dropped on all fours to mutter privately into the mike, but in the main he is madly himself.

In their own ways each of the others is as funny. Peter Cook, urbane with a plummy voice, gave a moving account of a little man whose ambition to be a judge was thwarted by lack of Latin and a tendency to yelp. Alan Bennett, looking like a serious-minded sixth-form boy, delivered a sermon that was only so very slightly off-beam that it would have sounded all right to ninety-nine per cent of most congregations. And Dudley Moore played splendid tricks on the piano with Colonel Bogey, and was at his most hysterical as a pianist who couldn't finish.

I have seldom been so sorry to see a curtain come down.

Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *Romulus the Great* was another play on the official list of the Festival. One wishes that Hitler could have been forced to give his attention to this in places devastating attack on the cherished beliefs of the loudmouthed

he-man. Based on a mythical Roman emperor who lets the empire slide into calculated ruin in order to save the world from the continued horrors of conquest, its execution is less witty than its central idea; there is enough meat here for a crisp one-act play, and to reach full-length it has had to be padded out with rather heavy-handed farce. But there is a mildly Shavian ring about some of the political arguments, and we grow increasingly interested in the fate of Romulus as the evening goes on.

Waving away the sweating messengers who bring news of his collapsing empire, he is a homely little fellow whose sole passion is the breeding of poultry. Not for some time do we grasp that his idleness is assumed, and that he is a supremely sensible man determined by total inaction to put an end to everything Rome stands for. With the invading Germans at the gates there is a risk they will be bought off by a tremendously rich trouser manufacturer who wants to marry his daughter; but Romulus is firm, and, steeling himself for death, is delighted to find the German commander as fanatical a poultry-keeper as himself. This is a neat end. One of the strongest scenes is that in which Romulus and his ambitious wife play the truth game in the middle of the night. I finished with the impression of a patchy play whose invention just failed it.

The Glasgow Citizens' Theatre gave it a fair performance. Joe Greig made Romulus an unshakably sensible little pudding of a man, Geraldine Newman was frighteningly the kind of Roman matron who liked her men scored like fillet steaks, and Hugh Sullivan as a returned P.O.W. was a living argument against the ballyhoo of war.

Taking the mickey out of the romantics is a wearying joke. Roger Planchon and his French company are such an able team of comics, so exceptionally well trained, that one would have liked to see them in an exercise more profitable than guying Dumas. They stick pretty closely to the story of *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, but everything is done tongue-in-cheek; to encompass so much narrative, speeding-up techniques are borrowed from the Brechtian and Chinese theatres. Miniature scenery is got from the flies; battles are represented by the rhythmic bending of a few men—these shorthand methods are very adroitly used. In fact I was struck with admiration for Monsieur Planchon's production at the same time that I was bored by it. Here and there a scene was amusing, where the comic skill of the actors shone through the



Romulus Augustus, Emperor of the West—JOE GREIG

[*Romulus the Great*

poverty of their material, but not often. It all seemed very like flogging a deadish horse. Monsieur Planchon himself played D'Artagnan as a bustling oaf. The funniest of his supporters were Jean Bouise, who made of Lord de Winter a fetching caricature, seen through French eyes, of an English aristocrat; and Jean-Pierre Barnard, whose Duke of Buckingham was assassinated while taking a bath in mid-stage in a water butt.

On the fringe was *Wallenstein*, a morbidly Germanic play by Schiller, presented by the Oxford and Cambridge Company in Francis Hope's translation. Wallenstein was the Emperor's commander in the Thirty Years' war and a monster of self-pity, who talked a great deal about his destiny and had the usual pathological belief in the stars. When at last his armies were sitting pretty he decided to take them over to the enemy as being the best way to ensure peace—though how this could be Schiller didn't explain—and was very indignant when his generals called him a traitor and were reluctant to follow him. He was always moaning because his master, who had after all raised him to a dukedom from scratch, had treated him so villainously. Clearly Schiller thought him a tragic hero, but I couldn't help feeling that when he was knifed by a loyal colonel he got what he had asked for.

It seemed a very long time before we reached this happy conclusion. The play was beyond the resources of a university society on a makeshift stage, but Peter Holmes as Wallenstein emerged as an actor of some authority, and John Binfield and Philippe Lejour also showed promise.

—ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PLAY

The Winter's Tale (STRATFORD)

In his first essay at Stratford Peter Wood, a young producer, completes this year's repertory with a triumphantly sane production of *The Winter's Tale*. It is beautifully staged, well-spoken and acted with passion; Eric Porter's Leontes is so full a study of jealousy that surely we shall soon see him as Othello. Most of the action is down-stage and brightly lit against Jacques Noel's set of dark, widely-spaced arches; his dresses stand up well to this treatment. Peggy Ashcroft is such a winning Paulina that for once one can understand how this lash-tongued lady escaped solitary confinement. Elizabeth Sellars, who appears to me to have come on greatly since the beginning of the season, is a touching and decorative Hermione, and Patrick Allen a sturdy Polixenes. Paul Hardwick's Camillo is a pillar of loyalty, and Tony Church's Antigonus more amusing than usual, though I felt he could easily have got away from the lowest-geared bear in memory. Jack MacGowran adds an immensely sly Autolycus to this season's list of comica. I thought Susan Maryott's Perdita and Dinsdale Landen's

SAY, HOW DO YOU GET THIS STUFF OFF?



Danny Ocean—FRANK SINATRA

Josh Howard—SAMMY DAVIS, JR.

Florizel not quite up to the high standard of this production. —ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

Ocean's Eleven
Let's Make Love
Bells Are Ringing

THE idea that formed the basis of the British *The League of Gentlemen* turns up again, many times larger than life, in the Hollywood film *Ocean's Eleven* (Director: Lewis Milestone). It's the same principle, of the army-trained experts who collaborate in organising a robbery, but—as one would expect of Hollywood—the scale is much bigger. There are getting on for twice as many men involved, there are five simultaneous robberies instead of one, the sum stolen runs into millions, the operation is planned and executed with much more professionalism and attention to detail, equipment is more up-to-date (British crooks would probably think infra-red paint a little vulgar), the whole thing is in Panavision Technicolor, there are five stars not counting the "guest stars," one of whom (Shirley MacLaine) doesn't even get a mention in the cast list.

And yet the result comes out very well; bigness and glossiness are not in themselves necessarily bad qualities, it's not as simple as that. The film has been criticised because the real suspense and excitement of the operation doesn't start till halfway through, and before that we have simply been introduced to the men who will take part in it; but I think objection on these grounds shows too narrow a point of view. If you start with the idea that this is nothing but the story of a robbery, all right—get down to it as quickly as possible, and never mind all that introductory stuff.

But I don't think it should be taken so seriously.

It would be easy simply to laugh at the clowning and amusing dialogue in this first part of the picture and fail altogether to notice or understand what is less obvious—the careful calculation and preparation for the job that are going on at the same time: I suspect that this is what some people who have casually written off the whole thing as "incredible" have done. But consider every detail of the plan, and it's hard not to admit that the five Las Vegas casinos, as we see them here, could have been successfully robbed by Danny Ocean (Frank Sinatra) and the ten friends who were in his unit of the 82nd Airborne. Crime mustn't be allowed to pay, so there are a couple of accidents afterwards, but without those they'd have got away with it. I found the whole thing highly entertaining from beginning to end.

This is guest-star week: some of the funniest moments in *Let's Make Love* (Director: George Cukor) are in scenes in which Bing Crosby, Milton Berle and Gene Kelly—who are not officially in the picture at all—are shown demonstrating their particular arts to the hero of the story (Yves Montand), who wants to impress a girl (Marilyn Monroe) and has nothing but money, which he doesn't want to tell her about, to do it with. His aim is to be loved for himself—yes, this is essentially the old formula of the prince in disguise, the modern equivalent of a prince being a fabulously rich tycoon—and therefore spends much time trying (with some help, as above) to appear somebody quite different. The central situation is ingenious: going to watch a little-theatre rehearsal because he hears he is to be lampooned in the show, he is (in view of

the astounding resemblance) offered the job of imitating himself, and takes it, having fallen for the leading lady. As usual, we see bits of the show, staged with an elaboration inconceivable in a little theatre but very pleasing, and Miss Monroe gives a delightful portrait of a simple-hearted nice girl, very sexy on the stage but with an off-duty passion for all-round helpfulness and self-improvement. The picture is full of good things; I enjoyed it very much.

Bells Are Ringing (Director: Vincente Minnelli) also is full of good things, the best being Judy Holliday, but too much of it suggests a stage original; and indeed it is, I gather, very much the same as the successful Broadway show by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. Plenty of people aren't worried by the mixture of conventions, that sudden change from straight naturalistic comedy, where one might be in the same room with the people concerned, to the "production number" in which some of them energetically punch their effects over imaginary footlights; but it always unsettles me and interrupts my pleasure. Nevertheless in themselves many of the scenes and songs and episodes are brilliantly enjoyable, and as a whole this story of a telephone-answering service and the switchboard girl who can't resist getting involved in the lives of her clients by trying to help them makes an attractive impression. Cinematically among the best and most amusing scenes is the quite incidental one of the accident-prone girl's "blind date" in a crowded restaurant; of the staged numbers, I liked best the chorus in the boiler-room. But Judy Holliday would make anything worth seeing.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

French language, French scriptwriter, mostly French players, French director, but *Come Dance With Me* with Brigitte Bardot, though it has amusing moments, seems pretty slapdash hokum. Could the reason be—American money? I recommend *Il Tetto* (24/8/60) and *Black Orpheus*

(8/6/60), and *The Fanatics* and *L'Eau Vive* in the same programme (31/8/60) are good value.

Best release: *Inherit the Wind* (20/7/60—132 mins.), very good indeed. And there's a remarkably good and funny little British Army comedy, *Light Up the Sky* (20/7/60—90 mins.).

—RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

The Corporation in Love

AS I write the Olympic Games are still a welter of diving, boxing, cycling, rowing and swimming, and every man, woman and child in Great Britain waits trembling with anxiety on the eve of the athletics and Mary Bignal's first Big Day. This, at least, is the impression given by the BBC's breathless, beaming corps of commentators. I have watched them now for nearly a week, in "Olympic Sportsview" and the late-night "Olympic Games" programmes, and they have left me in no doubt at all that this Miss Bignal is going to take part. They are coyly uncertain about whether she will become engaged to a tall foreign chap called Eef, but they have definitely decided that, win or lose, she is the absolute centre of this Roman hullabaloo of muscle, and they have lost no opportunity of reminding us of the fact. Sometimes, during a boxing session, I have been allowed to forget her for a few minutes; and there have been occasions when people like Anita Lonsborough or even Dick McTaggart have been spoken-of in suspiciously cooing terms: but Mr. Dimmock's gallant lads, remembering their first true love just in time, have always managed to get us back to Bignal, preferably in her running briefs, and add another cameo to the tale of this most touching courtship. We have had her running and jumping in her past events, walking about in Rome like an ordinary person, getting in and out of track suits, limbering up, training, and answering with enviable patience and

PUNCH EXHIBITIONS

"Punch in the Cinema." Gaumont, Sheffield.

"Punch in the Theatre." Opera House, Scarborough.

charm the hundred and one maddening inquiries put by members of "Sportsview's" gushing team. (There was one blush-making interview with a giggling David Coleman in which I thought I detected a look of calm astonishment on Miss Bignal's famous face, but she disappointed me. "Mr. Coleman," she did not say, "why don't you go and sit in the shade for a while with a nice cold sponge?") Still, I suppose it all adds spice to television. After all, the BBC's earlier romance, with Judy Grinham, never really came to anything (some say it was merely infatuation), and I'm sure we all wish the Corporation the best of luck in this its latest wooing. I hope that by the time these words reach print she will have collected at least one medal, because in my own quiet way I'm as fascinated by her flashing limbs as Uncle BBC, and she is obviously one of our main hopes of glory; but if she wins more than one, I don't think I shall be able to bear the aftermath. I can see it now. Mr. Dimmock bravely weeping at Rome H.Q.; Messrs. West, Robertson and Coleman receiving first-aid treatment for commentator's throat; Mr. Dimpleby himself being flown out with an escort of Bomber Command to embrace symbolically the dear girl on behalf of the whole Corporation; and wild scenes on the ten o'clock News at the declaration of a half-holiday for Broadcasting House, Lime Grove and the Television Centre.

I think Granada have dug a bit too deep into the works of Harold Brighouse. At his best he was a technically sound playwright with a crusading fire of which the heat can still excite an audience, although his battles were won long ago. But *Vitriol* was one of his more pedestrian works, with a set-up that almost parodied the entire Manchester school, and neither Gerald Savory's adaptation nor good solid performances by Barry Foster and George Devine quite managed to blow away the cobwebs. Still, Granada's record in drama is an honourable one, and I hope most viewers would sooner see a minor Brighouse than a major Iain MacCormick. I have always considered the latter to be overrated as a TV playwright. Solemn themes are not enough, and his *The Small Victory* (BBC) was so heavily laden with clichés, of both dialogue and characterization, that it never got properly off the studio floor. To take a small example the good-hearted tart, through no fault of Delphi Lawrence, was a caricature who became more and more laughable as it became apparent that she was never going to make an effort to push back that ever-so-naughty shoulder-strap. One thought of Dietrich in some steamy melodrama, and one was not moved.

—HENRY TURTON



"Go on then, run with the herd."

BOOKING OFFICE

CRICKET PAY-OFF

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

The Cricketer's Companion. Edited by Alan Ross. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 25/-

Through the Caribbean. Alan Ross. Hamish Hamilton, 21/-

SOMETIME in the remote future cricket will cease to be a real game played on village greens and imperial ovals and will dissolve into pure fiction. The Americans—even in an age of space travel and perfect peace—will never tire of their Westerns and we in Britain will never tire of our Nyrens, de Selincourts, Carduses and Robertson-Glasgows. Remote future, did I say? I am not so sure. The game is fading rapidly at county and Test level and without some miraculous surgical reconstruction will surely perish. Throughout every summer of discontent the county grounds lie like the memorial lawns of some sad crematorium: white ghosts shuffle abroad between the hours of 11.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. and a handful of elderly mourners moon dejectedly among the pavilion tombstones, studying the old inscriptions.

"Never mind," says the mourner in the M.C.C. tie, rattling the small change in his pocket, "the Australians will be here soon." He is thinking of the next days of judgment when the stands and terraces will once again be crowded and the collection plate will overflow with gratitude.

The writers seem aware of cricket's crisis. Their books roll out in a splendid stream, filling the reservoir against the day of doom. Nothing could be more fun than *The Cricketer's Companion* while we are waiting for cricket's resurrection (single innings matches played on Saturday afternoons on league principles by our leading towns). Alan Ross's anthology is happy, catholic, beautifully evocative. It will please everybody and nobody—everybody because he has raided the whole literature of cricket to make this selection, and because there are no glaring sins of omission; nobody because . . . well, there isn't nearly enough of A, B, C or Z.

My own reading in cricket began

with the Frank Richards stories of Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood, with the matches starring Wharton, Silver and Merry & Co. I was always disappointed at Mr. Richards's lack of mathematical precision. He seemed indifferent to a small boy's interest in the school averages, in score-sheets and analyses. But he was a great deal better than nothing. Next came Cardus in the days when he occupied a page of the *Guardian* by divine right with his accounts of Lancastrian doggedness and English recovery (c.1926). Then Swanton and Robertson-Glasgow, Peebles and Ross himself—all first-rate and highly individual interpreters of the great game. All these I have loved and all appear in this collection. Fingleton on S. F. Barnes, Arlott on Tate, Ray Robinson on Miller, A. A. Thomson on W. G. Grace, "A Country Vicar" on Ranji: meat and drink to the present pessimist.

The "Poetry of Cricket" is wonderfully varied, from Byron to Lucas, Francis Thompson to Don Yeomans, and naturally enough inconsistent in

quality, but most of the classics are here and, with one glaring exception, "The Cricket Club of Red Nose Flat" (has Mr. Ross never heard of it?), most of the minor classics.

This is a noble compendium.

Alan Ross has also produced his own account of the last tour of the West Indies, and in *Through the Caribbean* he gives us another delightful brew-up of cricket and travel, a fair companion piece to his *Australia 55* and *Cape Summer*.

The description and analysis of the Test series are somehow less memorable than the social, topographical and cultural comment—the trouble being, I suppose, that it is less easy when reporting the game to avoid the clichés of the professional commentator. There is only one genuinely surprising disclosure, the odd behaviour of manager Robins on the last day of the final Test: "Yet on what should have been an afternoon of celebration, the manager chose to rebuke the England captain (Cowdrey) in unnecessarily crude terms before his team and to disassociate himself from the whole proceedings." Enough said. The appetite of the serious student of cricket must be already whetted.

ACCENT ON YOUTH

Gone Away. An Indian Journal. Dom Moraes. Heinemann, 18/-

The Monks of Mount Athos. Jacques Valentin. Translated by Diana Athill. Deutsch, 18/-

Mr. Moraes, twenty-two-year-old Indian, is still young enough to be proud of his nuisance value: "Nobody expected me to finish my three years at Oxford . . . always in trouble . . . when I felt like going to London, or even abroad, I always went . . . brought up trainloads of drunken poets who turned the college into a shambles." Last autumn he spent a short time in India, armed with V.I.P. introductions from his father—editor of the *Times of India*—and long-suffering friends as interpreters since he speaks no word of his country's languages. This is the record of his flittings—from Nehru to the Dalai Lama, Malcolm MacDonald to the "Chee-na" Lama, a great Nepalese poet's deathbed by the burning ghats to a brush with the Chinese on the Tibetan frontier.

It all seems very clever stuff while actually in your hand, but is curiously disappointing in retrospect since so little emerges of the author's own attitude towards present-day India. Understandable in a novel, but this *enfant terrible* is not yet a novelist. If he is shrewd enough to realize that a sort of reporting—through a painter's eye and with a poet's felicitous economy of words—is his best bet at the moment then I

PRESENTING THE CRITICS



23—ERIC KEOWN
Theatre, Punch

wish that his self-judgment had also led him to omit daily references to a considerable intake of alcohol. Brandy and hard-boiled eggs is a breakfast vision too horrible to contemplate.

Jacques Valentin and two young friends decided to live for several months on Mount Athos, the holy mountain of the Orthodox Church and a place on which no female has set foot for over a thousand years. They were imbued with curiosity as to whether the monks there—some solitary hermits, some in loosely disciplined groups and a few in more conventional monastic orders—had preserved the ideal of a spiritual life, or (as so many other communities) had fallen by the wayside of human frailty.

The book is the more remarkable in that its makers were avowedly of a different cast of thought from the spiritual one they were to investigate, yet neither condescension nor undue awe appear in it—neither the all too easy sneer at the apparently wasted life of the contemplative, nor the equally easy starry-eyed enthusiasm of youth at finding something new. A simple, straightforward account, in which keen observation, apt comment and some splendid photographs bring this strange, masculine world of physical hardship and spiritual struggle most vividly to life. — JOHN DURRANT

NEW FICTION

The Golden Youth of Lee Prince. Aubrey Goodman. Methuen, 18/-

The Haunting of Hill House. Shirley Jackson. Michael Joseph, 15/-

A Number of Things. Honor Tracy. Methuen, 15/-

The Riddle of the Fly. Elizabeth Enright. Heinemann, 15/-

I enjoyed *The Golden Youth of Lee Prince* very much but I am not quite sure

why. Described in cold retrospect it sounds like so many American first novels of the past fifty years: *bas-relief* narrator watches social success and inner failure of glittering college chum and sedulously charts his decline into paralysis of the will, despite ever wilder parties, ever more frenetically witty conversation, ever more ingeniously *outré* expenditure. One difference is that this version is written from relish in being young and smart and gay, not from a lickerish fascination with failure. The narrator enjoys the fashionable prep school and Yale and the unexpected invitation to share a New York apartment with the brilliant Prince, whom he really hardly knows. He revels in the stream of eccentrics who pass through their lives, the knowingness about cafés and films and new nightclub performers, the endless talk, even the endless jazz, though it is always too loud. He is forced to move out partly because he cannot get any reading done for his law degree at Columbia and partly because he is afraid of being caught up in the Prince's sexual disintegration. The ending is unexpected, unpredictable, teasing. Some of the attraction of the book is in its sheer efficiency. Everybody describes funny people met at parties and fantasies developed in idle conversation and New York in different seasons and different moods; Mr. Goodman does it better than most.

This is deliberately a variation on themes of Scott Fitzgerald. The rich have been getting richer for over thirty years; but there is comparatively little change except in hair-styles and -singers. Perhaps one change is the prevalence of pervers. Money and youth remain much the same. Yet something has altered. There is a difference in flavour. Lee Prince's ancestors include Saki's Reginald, Max Beerbohm's James

Pethell, Firbank in person and many Fitzgerald characters, especially Anthony Patch. (The blurb says *Gatsby*!) Mr. Goodman has managed to give individuality to a character who is both symbolical and composite. However, the most important point to make about the novel is that it is, perhaps ironically, a success.

The Haunting of Hill House is a very good ghost story, given an extra dimension of horror by some morbid psychology. A psychical researcher invites the heir to a haunted house, a young woman whose published scores in telepathy tests have been outstanding and another who was once the centre of poltergeist phenomena to stay in the house and take notes. The building is evil in itself and becomes a character in the tale. The watchers themselves are not all . . . normal. This is one of Miss Jackson's best books. Significantly, when I wanted to call it a spine-chiller I first typed *chine-spiller*.

Miss Tracy lets *A Number of Things* degenerate from observant farce into mere glumming *in vacuo*. She sometimes gives the impression that she has never opened a left-wing paper or met a British Council official. Her novelist hero's adventures in Trinidad as a special correspondent would be more consistently funny if the things Miss Tracy dislikes had been more carefully examined. However, some of the hits at the new Caribbean aristocracy are shrewd and ought to be salutary, there is plenty of invention and the novel has verve as a whole and some brilliant bits. There have been many duller romps.

The Riddle of the Fly is a collection of very accomplished short stories from American magazines, as what collection these days is not? Somehow all this careful variety and efficiency makes one long for Lawrence with his passion and looseness and air of wanting to create his own readers and market. I read the stories with interest and ease; I wish, though, I felt I should remember them.

— R. G. G. PRICE

ROYAL RETIREMENT

Lonely But Not Alone. H.R.H. Wilhelmina, Princess of the Netherlands. Hutchinson, 30/-

The former queen of the Netherlands was the only child of her father's second marriage, and as none of his sons survived him she inherited the throne at the age of ten. In her guarded description of her childhood there are occasional flashes of recollection that lighten the level dullness of the style—the arrival of a team of four Shetland ponies, or surreptitious skating lessons—but the earnestness with which her religious experiences are examined is the clue to her development from a nervous child into a courageous queen. Her husband, Prince Hendrik, was a simple man who loved hunting, forestry and driving four-in-hand. These activities solved for him the difficult problem of occupation for a royal consort.

At the end of the First World War the Queen was called early with the news that



"The nephew did it."

the Kaiser had crossed the frontier into Holland. At the beginning of the Second World War she was called early and advised to leave The Hague. In between she had had few illusions as to Hitler's intentions, but her religious faith has invariably supported her through the trials of war and peace. — VIOLET POWELL

HEDGEROW NOBILITY

Lords and Ladies. Cecil T. Prime. Collins, 21/-

This book is unusual in being about a single kind of flower and in being written by a scientist who can express himself simply in good English. Obviously it will be a joy to the naturalists for whom it is mainly intended, but in spite of a few intimidating tables and some necessarily rarefied discussion much of it can almost be described as light reading.

The private life of lords-and-ladies fully justifies Dr. Prime's amused and immensely thorough treatment. Its method of pollination is unique and bizarre. In the evening it kidnaps female moth-flies, bribes them with nectar while covering them with pollen, and releases them next morning from its vegetable night-club to pollinate another flower spike. It provided the starch for Elizabethan ruffs, was a mediæval aphrodisiac and a cure for gout. This astonishing flower is poisonous, extremely beautiful and foully smelly, and English dialect has rightly honoured it with a hundred names of varying indecency.

— ERIC KEOWN

POMPEIAN HICKEY

The Writing on the Wall. Jack Lindsay. Frederick Muller, 25/-

Mr. Lindsay is an adept at writing history without tears: he does a great deal of home-work on his chosen period, and usually manages to be both accurate and entertaining. In this book about the last days of Pompeii, he adopts the not very felicitous device of putting his descriptions into the mouth of a gossipy old Pompeian—a combination of guide, philosopher and pimp—who is supposed to be showing a newcomer the sights of the town. Mr. Lindsay quotes his sources (the surviving graffiti and such books as della Corte's *Casa ed Abitanti di Pompeii*, etc.), and one supposes that his facts are mostly right, but the narrator's style—full of modern (and sometimes American) colloquialisms—is apt to jar and, like nearly all guides in real life, he becomes a bit of a bore. Mr. Waugh in *Helena* could just manage to get away with the transposition of Roman small-talk into a contemporary idiom, but Mr. Lindsay is less successful. However, his conducted tour of hotels, baths, plays, amphitheatres, taverns, lupanars, and so on is readable enough, and in an entertaining appendix he supplies the Latin originals

FRANCES CORNFORD

WE record with regret the death of Mrs. Frances Cornford, a number of whose verses appeared in the pages of *Punch*.

of such demotic and slang terms as sod, back-scuttler, queer, and the rest. The illustrations, obtained from various sources, are quite fun.

— JOYCELYN BROOKE

BOARDING-HOUSE ANTHROPOLOGY

In Pursuit of the English. Doris Lessing. MacGibbon and Kee, 21/-

Mrs. Lessing labels this account of her first year in London "A Documentary"; but, though she begins by using the extraordinary family she lodged with to illustrate English characteristics, she soon abandons the attempt and concentrates a fascinated attention on her truculent landlord, his avaricious, sexy wife and her fellow-lodgers. One feels she would like to have found they were typical of the English working-class and does not quite admit they were not.

However, whether fictionalized autobiography, autobiographical fiction or sociological investigation, this is social comedy that combines subtlety and gusto. Sometimes, as in the description of the court proceedings when the landlord was trying to evict two moribund tenants, it is riotous rather than convincing. More often, for example in Mrs. Lessing's picture of her uneasy relationship with Rose, her closest ally among the lodgers, the writing is delicately precise. As in other pictures of proletarian life by the middle-class, there are awed accounts of mountainous meals.

— R. G. G. PRICE

THE AMERICAN STAGE

The Living Theatre. Elmer Rice. Heinemann, 21/-

This book is the fruit of lectures which Elmer Rice gave, without notes, to graduates of New York University. The views of such a practical and successful dramatist on the theatre outside America are of great interest, and contain such plums as his account of a Marxist Hamlet in Moscow; but the book's chief value for the English reader is the very thorough way it turns inside out every aspect of the American theatre.

He thinks American actors suffer from a lack of permanent companies, and that ours



are better trained. He gives a depressing picture of the theatre in New York, its playhouses out-of-date and experiment handicapped by fabulous production costs, due partly to unionism run mad (*Two for the Seesaw*, with only two characters, had nineteen stagehands wished on it). Warehouse costs are now so prohibitive that it is cheaper to haul scenery away and burn it. But he is proud, and rightly, that from the point of view of censorship the American theatre is the least hampered in the world.

— E. O. D. K.

FOR FARNBOROUGH ADDICTS

The Aeroplane: An Historical Survey. Charles Gibbs-Smith. H.M.S.O., 35/-

Encyclopaedic in scope, but enthusiastically subjective in manner, this book surveys the history of the aeroplane from its first origins to the present day. It is stuffed with information, including enough technicalities to please the expert but not enough to deter the amateur. The many illustrations are chosen with wit and discretion, and the production is up to the Stationery Office's usual high standard. It should sell by tens of thousands.



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BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

FOR WOMEN



Summer Courtship

I AM not the kind of fair-weather glitter-grabber who rates Cadillacs and ropes of diamonds a girl's best friends; but I do like a little gilt on the gingerbread, and I can see now that Granby calls even a gingerbread a luxury.

He caught me in the off season. That is, he caught me when everybody else was off except me. And I was bogged down in a spell of cheap living, holidays abandoned, and planning a week by the Serpentine picnicking on left-overs.

He said There would Always be an England, which seemed to me a good reason for getting out of it once in a while; and he said Britain was Best, which I thought just as well if you were stuck with it. He said, too, that I was wrong to assume a skiff on the Serpentine was the only alternative to a Mediterranean cruise, because skiffs also cost money. So we settled for Kensington Gardens, which were nearer than the Serpentine and saved me Granby's bus fare.

We sat all the first morning under a leaden sky, watching the cavorting of the Kensington dogs from a corrugated seat near the Round Pond, and he told me about the Best Things in Life being Free. He could have written a book on it, and I could have written another on the things he left out, for he took until lunch time to put me in the picture and he never even mentioned free kicks, free fights or free love. I was so impressed I gave him a free hand and we got down to enjoying ourselves.

We swam in ponds (Highgate, men only—I waited); Kenwood (Ladies only—he went back to Highgate); and in the Lidos on free days. We did country dancing gratuitously on Parliament Hill and we made tours of Battersea Park, keeping strictly to the gardens—free section. We watched other people paying

to watch cricket, bowls, croquet and golf, and I gave Granby the freedom of my left-overs, since we had to eat at somebody's expense.

I suppose it was a fine, free way of going on, but perhaps I had lived too long with the jingle of money bags to turn a deaf ear now. I began to wince under the burden of so much freedom and to yearn for the servitude of a bit of senseless spending. I started to drool at the sight of an ice-cream cart and to goggle at juke boxes and slot machines. And at nights my luscious dreams of sixpenny—concerts were wrecked by the spectre of Granby trying to make me qualify in the half-price range for accompanied children or old-age pensioners.

He did wrong to take me within hearing distance of an orchestra in the Victoria Embankment gardens. The sight of those feckless spendthrifts, lolling at ease in their comfortable, paid-for seats, upsurged all my latent love of the lavish. Blind to my bread line, I exerted my sagging free will. I lost Granby in the crowd, bought myself half a pound of rum truffles and ate the lot on a jazzy ride round the town in a taxi.

My week off was over, glory be, but Granby's attentions were not. He sent me so many circulars of the latest free-for-alls that my doormat began to resemble ticker-tape day in the States. He took to banging on my window to get me up at sparrow's twitter, and he forced me officewards on foot through the parks to enjoy the free, fresh air.

I longed for a stand-up ride in a bus, or a nose-to-neck rush-hour jaunt in the Underground, and I began a game of avoidance, sidling out of back entrances, dipping at the knees to disguise my height; and I came and went erratically, leaving too early, too late or not at all.

But Granby was not one to let up lightly. He wrote me a note which I watched him poke stampless through the letter-box. It commented on the odd hours I kept, so I wrote back and said I didn't keep any hours at all. I just woke up and when I woke up, I got up; and when I got up, I went. I added I might even go on a night shift. It was easier than lying awake worrying about the time to get up in the morning.

That was a mistake. He caught me by the simple means of ringing my bell, and he squeezed himself through the inch I opened the door, before I had time to disguise myself as my mother and say I was out.

"I've brought you this," he said. "Will you marry me?"

I unpicked the parcel to gain time; and gain time I did. It was a clock.

"It's an alarm," he said. "You just have to set it."

I thought of my prim, punctual future. And I thought of all the rainy days he had been saving up for, and how it rained all the time, but never enough to loosen his grip on the gold. And I thought of all the years ahead with nothing to lighten them but a lot more free fun; and a toothless old age, eking out the National Health Pension, our long-stocking waiting to be squandered by our offspring, supposing we were mad enough to afford any.

"Not just now," I said, wildly. "I must get off these cheques. I owe bills all over the place, and I have just bought a chaise longue and a fur stole. All on the instalment plan, of course. I hope I get a rise. I shall need it. I never saw money go so fast..."

For once I was on the right tack. I never saw Granby go so fast, either.

— DIANA PETRY

Getting Started

HIGH tides of vigour urge
My soul; the sap upflows
In that wild mental surge

That every housewife knows,

The yearning to employ
One's true creative skill,
To feel the artist's joy
Spring with the shaping will,

To breathe that mountain air
Which only those who Make—
Hand me the flour-bin there,
I'm going to have a bake.

— ANGELA MILNE

Myself Surprised

THE day's first glimpse of myself comes from the mirror in the bathroom. I have risen serenely, bestowing a Madonna smile on my attendant husband. How nice to watch your wife waking up beautifully, I reflect, glancing in the mirror. It shows a white face, freckled with brown, and streaked with pink where I have lain on a creased pillow. Hair flies round the head like a feather duster, and my eyes are drooping slits rather than slanting and Chinese, as I have imagined.

But the bath is a great restorer. Even the undignified business of cleaning my teeth is glamorized by the romantic mist now clouding the mirror. Through the haze I see that hot water has brought a warm colour to my cheeks and opened my eyes. Avoiding the magnifying side of my husband's shaving mirror I put on some make-up and feel pretty all through breakfast.

A last, long look in the full-length wardrobe mirror confirms the flattering impression. Manufacturers should be generous enough to tint the glass pink.

It is only as I walk to the bus stop that my confidence drains away. The idea grows on me that my petticoat is showing. Bending my waist backwards and my knees forwards, I peer in the window of a parked car—to meet the accusing eye of the occupant. I straighten up hurriedly and try the next car along, more casually this time. The sight of a squat, bulging figure springs from the curved, shiny door. After that I pull my tummy in and keep my eyes ahead.

The office mirror is no comfort. I know that it isn't me who has a silver crack running from ear to ear, but the grey smudges are harder to allot.

Only the mirrored walls of my luxurious lunchtime rendezvous console me. Never has hair looked so glossy, eyes so bright, cheeks so delicately flushed. Or could it be the wine? The uncertainty makes me desperate for a real, honest look at myself.

It was when I was shopping in a big department store that I saw a plump, untidy woman bumping towards me. She was slung round with packages, and her hem was down. There was something familiar about her—and behind her was a material counter like the one I had just passed. It was me!

Blindly, I went forward. The woman came nearer, a strange look on her face.

"Excuse me," she said, and passed on.

— ANN BONE



Sempé

Toby Competitions

No. 130—Something Sinister

COMPLETE, in not more than 120 words, a tale beginning "There was something eerie about the buffet that night."

A framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up receive a one guinea book token. Entries by first post on Wednesday, September 14. Address to TOBY COMPETITION No. 130, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Toby 127

(Back View)

Competitors were asked for extracts from the reminiscences of: A patient of Dr. Watson's, a team mate of Raffles's, a client of Philip Marlowe's, a parishioner of Father Brown's or James Bond's. Most of the Watsons were the same, even to puns on "alimentary" and "elementary." Nearly all the Bonds were restrained. Very few competitors tried Raffles. On the whole, an unsparkling entry, some good jokes being spoilt by being set in dough.

The winner of the framed *Punch* original is:

MRS. JOAN SMITH
15 HEATHCOTE COURT
HEATHCOTE AVENUE
ILFORD, ESSEX

Someone was putting marbles in my brandy balls. At the third set of dentures,

Marlowe came in. Chi-Chi, my wife answered the door; they had drinks on the sofa.

He left, then snuck back in. A man stood over the bon-bon dish. Someone slugged Marlowe from behind and the guy got away.

Manny Harris held Marlowe on suspicion of attempting my murder . . . the man was Marlowe's reflection in the mirror; Chi-Chi saw him.

Marlowe said the mirror didn't hang directly above the bon-bon dish. Rushed back home. My valet was all shot on my best Aubusson. He'd taken my cash but not my wife . . . who resented it. The marbles, said Marlowe, were her idea.

You can't figure it? Well, don't ask me. Ask Marlowe. That's what I hired him for.

Among the runners-up were:

Bond was always terribly touchy about his personal belongings. I remember that one day he caught me twanging the brim of his boater which was very heavy and gave off a noise like tuned steel. He grabbed it from me and flung it across the room where it embedded itself in the wood panelling.

I was in for a beating but luckily Mrs. LaMode, the young red-headed wife of the Housemaster, burst into the study sobbing "Bond . . . he's found out. You must . . ."

All I remember then is sailing through the air and landing in a heap in the corridor as the door slammed behind them.

Bond left the school a few days after, rather hurriedly. Mrs. LaMode was never

quite the same. I'd always thought her rather jolly before . . .

G. F. Barnes, 153 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1

Fadther Brown, is ut? It's he was the queer fella. Wan day I meets him in the street, an' him wid a bit girleen by the hand, an' both av thim, if ye plaze, bitin' chunks out av candy-floss. I looks at him: "I like it," 'e sez, an' gives me a wink, an' passes on.

I remember wance, after confession, 'e sez to me: "Me son, go and sin no more."

"Why, Fadther," sez I, "widout sin ye'd be out av a job."

"Me son," 'e sez, "Paradise isn't just round the corner. You give up sin an' there'll be plenty left to go round. New get along wid ye!"

Ach, what a man! But tell me, now, why didn't the good God make him an Irishman?

W. Stewart, 58 Meadway, Liverpool, 15

Another of Lord Snodbury's XI was A. J. Raffles, slow left-arm, full of strokes and a tiger in the field. 7 for 61 in the Gentlemen v. Players had brought him his invitation. A handsome chap, who rather puzzled us: pleasant enough, witty in conversation, but possessing a certain cold reserve that discouraged intimacy. Perhaps not with the ladies!

Going downstairs one night for my tobacco-pouch, I was very nearly shocked out of decent composure by passing a dark, shadowy figure standing bolt upright in one corner of the landing, black even to gloves and face-mask! But the moonlight glinted on a tiny dent in one toecap, which I had seen him make. The philanderer! I wonder who she was? That was the night Ben Samuels lost his ruby.

R. A. McKenzie, 28 Harold Road, Beulah Spa, London, S.E.19

. . . Jimmy the idol, uplifting boys' ideals and stamping on local girls' morals.

Knocking his door, numbered 007 (privilege of J. as school captain); usual scrambling, whispers and Bond unlocking door; greeting with playful punch that renews my visits to Matron (rumoured J. himself visits M. frequently).

"Clean my .22 International." (Later obtained a .25 Beretta.) Lying on rumpled bed, bottle at elbow, ice-blue eyes closed, smoking a Woodbine (Morland's of Grosvenor Street was a far cry then).

Goggling at his trophies (some, of THE chase); masquerading in text-book wrappings—*Underworld Guide to World's Cities* (he was, I remember, passionately fond of geography), *Love Techniques*, *Skindiving in the Med*.

"Sensual thug", my Headmaster, Dr. Thorneycroft, labelled him; rather harshly, I feel, as the happiest days of my life. . .

4249676 J/T Ward, J. F., 338 Signals Unit, Royal Air Force, Northorn, B.F.P.O. 17

One-guinea Book Tokens to the above, and to: Miss E. J. Lines, 10a Windsor Road, London, W.5; G. J. Blundell, Littlewood, East Malling, Kent



"How much do you reckon we'll take?"

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